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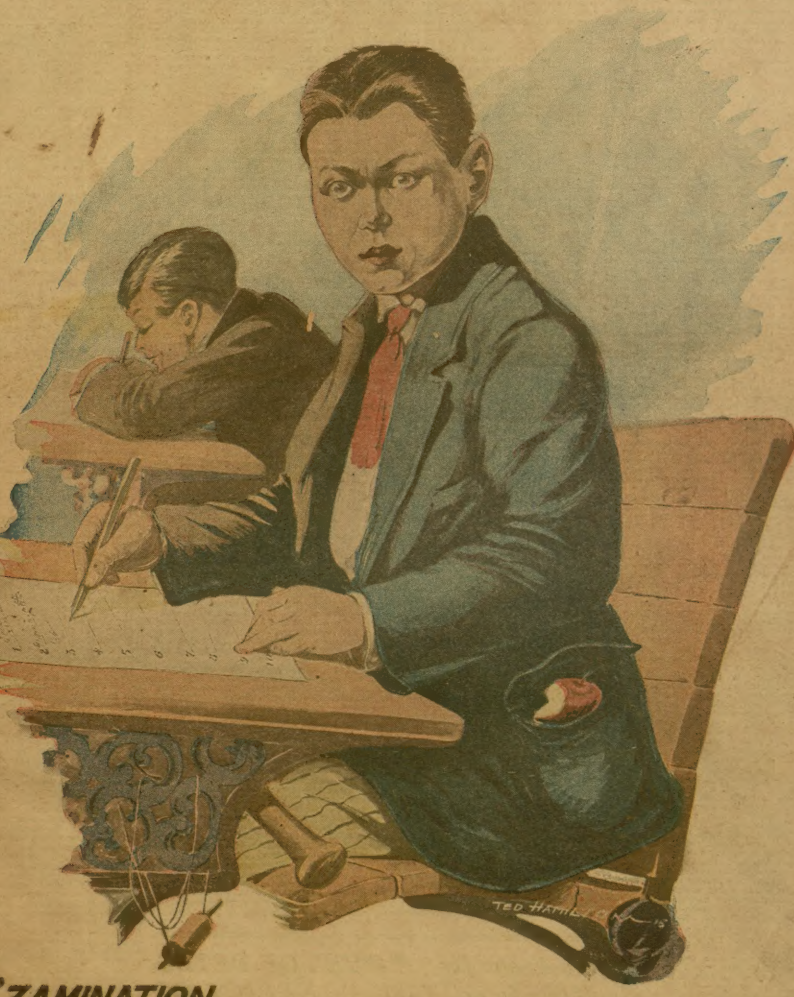
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TED HAMIL

'ZAMINATION

Muggins Tarney's Dope

Or, Breaking the Dam at Queen Cove

By Alvah Milton Kerr

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THERE, take the meddy, that's Mummy's nice little man. It will do Tollie good—make him all well."

But the "nice little man" put both the medicine and flattery aside with a wailing protest, his small, pale face wrinkling itself into a many-lined weather-map, with the mouth the chief storm center.

"Mummy will put some sugar in—make it nice and sweety—then Tollie will take it."

Still, with this alluring addition, Tollie came only slightly nearer the mysterious bait. He blinked his blue eyes over the proffered cup, tasted the contents, and threw himself back and voiced an unqualified disapproval of sleep-engendering potions of all sorts. He was a very, very young man, but he was old with the primal instinct of self-preservation and naturalness.

The mother looked worried. Her abundant brown hair was tumbled awry, her loose gown was slightly stringy and soiled, but, being unpinned at the neck, showed a milk-white throat. Her face was comely, though clearly the preservation of its comeliness was not her chief care; her hands, from the viewpoint of the aesthetic, were a pronouncement against dishwater and housework. The room about her was comfortable enough—a nickel-trimmed hard-coal stove, muslin window curtains, a cabinet organ, a reddish three-ply carpet soiled here and there and ornamented with battered toys. Outside, beyond a white picket-fence and a frozen street, spread the Paley Fork yards, the tracks and roundhouse and division station offices of the Western Central. Beyond the yards and the pinched confines of the little town, both to north and south, soared mountains in billowy masses. Brown-bosomed for the most part, the towering slopes were darkened here and there with clots of scrubby pines, and here and there the lords of the peaks wore vast hoods of glistening white. Afar in the west the dying sun hung between two horns of a mountain-top, golden, shimmering; the air was cold and vaguely yellow; snowflakes, widely scattered and wandering like the souls of bees, drifted and wavered, seemingly too light to come to earth. Upon the mountains there was silence, in the Paley Fork yards the clanging of engine bells, the hiss of steam from exhaust cocks, and now and again the clumping rattle of drawheads battering together.

The woman in the cottage put the cup down and corked the bottle that furnished the cup with its vexing contents. She folded the little man close to her and began rocking him, crooning softly the while. In a moment she shifted her chair so that he could not see the bottle, for each sight of it apparently gave the wee fellow a disturbing qualm. Over by the north window a larger little man sat flat on the floor, a clutter of small things about him—the disorganized works of an old clock, screws, strings, and bits of whittled wood. With a pocketknife, a tack-hammer, and a screw-driver he was laboring at the construction of a locomotive, the motive power of which he conceived might be furnished by the spring of the dismantled clock. Clearly he was a man of action and imagination. He had a big head from which, but the day before, a tousled mass of reddish curls, worn from infancy, had been shorn clean away. His head felt rather cold, to be sure, but delightfully light and airy and nice. He ran a grimy hand over its surface now and then with manifest interest; it felt like some one else's head, or, at least, a new one. However, it was immensely satisfactory. He had real starry eyes, light brown and twinkling at everything. He looked at the disturbing bottle, at the tiny white face cuddled against the woman's bosom, and down at his tools and materials sweepingly. Apparently he could conceive a great many ambitions, as well as several sorts of mischief, in a single moment, or, at any rate, within a very short period of time. He ruminated:

"Tollie's sick, that's what he is—he's thess a white little feller with no strenth, that's what he is—that ole med'cine makes him sick, that's what it does—I wonder how I can make this spring stay coiled up? I ought t' have a key t' wind it up with, that's what I ought—Mummy shouldn't give him the ole stuff—it makes him go t' sleep w'en he don't want to, an' it's awful t' go t' sleep w'en you don't want to—I wish there wasn't no night nor no ole sleep, it's thess a waste of time, that's what it is—Where did I put that file? Here it is under me—If I get a chance I'll empty out that ole med'cine so Tollie won't have it t' take, that's what I will—I'll have t' toot for this engine w'en it runs; I can't make a tooter on it; for that takes steam—I'll make a bell for the engine out of Mummy's silver thimble, that's what I will—if Pa would happen t' step on my engine, he's got such big—My, if I only had four silver dollars t' make the drivers out of! I'll ask Pa, that's what I will—Pa ought t' take the med'cine; he said he could take a quart of it an' not get sleepy; that's what he tole Tollie—Pa showed me how t' start a engine w'en I climbed up on Big Susan t' see him yest'day; it's thess as easy; you thess push a thing over an' away you go; some time I'm going t' be a engineer, that's what I am—Tollie's gone t' sleep; I wonder if that sup he took did it? He's thess a white little feller an' ain't got no strenth; that's what he is."

Heavy feet came tramping across the porch, the woman softly but swiftly ran up a stairway with the "white little feller," and, placing him carefully upon a bed, came noiselessly down again. A big, hearty-looking man was laughingly examining the work of the small laborer by the north window. He turned with a merry, "Hello, Lady Mother!" Lady Mother smiled but laid a finger on her lips with a hushing "sh-s-s-s!" and pointed toward the chamber above.

"He asleep?" whispered the big man.

Lady Mother nodded her head. The big man tiptoed across the room toward the little dining-room. "Have to get supper right off," he said; "ordered out on a special—go in about an hour. Fill my lunch-pail, Lady Mother; put in lots of coffee; going to be a cold night and a long run. Here, Muggins, if you don't make less racket pounding on that machine we'll give you some dope out of the bottle to quiet you." He looked at the young engine-builder with simulated severity. "This isn't a boiler factory; you disturb your mother and the baby. Say, Sue, you better give him a dose of the entrancer in the morning; keep him quiet during the day." He winked at Lady Mother.

The husband and wife passed into the dining-room. Muggins laid down his tools and went over and looked at the "entrancer" with a very serious countenance. Every relation that hinged upon the existence of this soporific stuff, to his way of thinking, demanded its annihilation; all the factors of consideration ran to one point and cohered in a verdict of condemnation. He quickly cast about in search of the most secret and least incriminating means of ridding the house of it. Spying his father's big lunch-pail sitting back of the stove, his bright eyes became brighter. Pa had declared that he could drink a quart of the medicine without experiencing ill effects. Obedient to the suggestion and several other psychic promptings peculiar to six-year-old boys, Muggins seized the pail, unscrewed the stopper of the coffee-tank and poured the offending concoction into the receptacle. There wasn't nearly a quart of the medicine, anyhow, not more than a half-pint, perhaps, and of course Pa would never mind a little dab like that. Maybe it would do Pa good, for Pa had a troublesome bunion, and the medicine might cure it. Upon full and serious consideration Muggins convinced himself that, as a point of pure logic, medicine must be good for bunions, but as a means of bringing sleep upon little boys—manifestly that was unjust and ridiculous.

Having disposed of the poppied menace, the telltale bottle remained. Alarmed by this fact, Muggins ran out and was in the act of hiding the bottle under the fence when an idea popped up in his mind. All sorts of things were in the habit of popping up in Muggins's mind, among them occasionally a real idea. The contents of the bottle had been of a milky hue. Slipping the empty bottle inside his jacket, Muggins awaited an opportunity, and after supper filled the bottle with water, adding a little cream from the cream-jug and a pinch of sugar. The next day Lady Mother was surprised and pleased that Tollie took the medicine so nicely, and even Muggins had to have a swallow of it, since, as he declared, he felt prickly and restless, which no doubt was true.

The closing meal of the day, made memorable by Muggins's "real idea," having been hurriedly eaten, Pa kissed Lady Mother and the guileless culprit, seized his full lunch-pail, and strode over to the roundhouse to give Big Susan a lookover before the hostler should bring the mighty iron maiden out on the main track. Jack Tarney was particular about some things, Big Susan being one of the things. He had a strong and justified affection for her, the machine being one of the greatest and safest in the mountains. She was a Baldwin compound, using her steam in two sets of cylinders and gaining enormous power thereby; she had eight drivers and weighed 270,000 pounds, and she held her head high and snorted defiance to things both small and great. To drive such an embodiment of power, to hold the reins over such a creature, feeling the beautiful monster obedient to the iron bit, was quite enough to make a man proud of and particular about the business. But a "real idea," hatched even in a child's brain, is sometimes of greater potency than an engine's strength or a man's care and pride—it embodies Destiny itself.

As Jack Harney, perched in the cab on the right-hand shoulder of Big Susan, rolled eastward over the Paley Fork switches that evening, he looked over at the cottage. The man who leaves home to ride over mountains on a creature whose bowels are filled with fire and hot steam cannot always feel sure that he is coming back. There is ever the haggard Possible lurking beyond the Probable. His gaze lingered on the roof as it melted out of view; the "little white feller" was there, and down in the lighted sitting-room no doubt Lady Mother was sewing by the nickel-trimmed stove, and over by the north window—it really would be nice and funny if Muggins could use four silver dollars as drivers for his engine! But that would be altogether too profligate. Hard coal, and lots of other things, were too costly in Colorado.

The stars came out over the mountains, swimming goldenly in big blue pools of sky among drifting islands of fleece; the wind sucked cold against his face in the canyons when he leaned out, peering anxiously ahead around the curves, for they were running as the second section of freight Number 12. By times he saw the rear lamps of the first section, two crimson eyes, whisked out of sight beyond jutting rocks or glaring back from some lifting grade, perhaps a mile way. By ten o'clock they were well up the twisting slopes of the Cradle Range, by eleven they were upon the summit. The moon came up, slicing the scud like a colter of pearl; the wind blew in brisk, cold puffs; the mountains looked like vast heaps of ashes. It was still forty miles to Barn Butte, the division station, down among the hills near the plains country. Tarney got out his lunch-pail from the seat-box and began to eat and drink.

"This coffee tastes sort of funny—chicory or varnish or something," was his mental comment. "Guess it's the cream—kind of stale twang; reckon that Swede milkman must feed his cows rubber boots." Nevertheless he drained the tank.

As he dropped the pail in the seat-box he glanced ahead. The red lamps were two or three miles below. "McCracken is hittin' her up in great shape tonight," he ruminated. He leaned back and squinted around the boiler-head at the fireman. The man down on the fuel-deck looked like a perspiring negro. He had pulled the furnace door open and, bowing in the reddish glare, was washing his grimy face and arms in a bucket of water. Big Susan would need but little steam through the next twenty-five miles.

They rolled downward, following the glimmering rails around jutting heads and across wide slopes, over fills and through cuts that were mimic canyons, but always downward. Here and there they caught glimpses of the crimson eyes winking back at them and whisking out of view. Once the crimson eyes seemed not a quarter of a mile away, again, they were surely a mile distant. Tarney began to grow fearfully sleepy. The feeling frightened him. He kicked the footboard roughly and rubbed his forehead, he hung out the window and drew down great breaths of cold air. Effort and air did no good; his eyelids were fringed with lead, a great robe of content, downy, delicious, was enfolding him. He tore at it, pushed it back, he hated it, yet it wrapped him closer, filling him with dreamy warmth and pleasure. He pushed up his eyelids with his oily fingers and tried to look at his watch. They must stop at Dander for orders—both sections; he must shut off and use air about a quarter of a mile west of the station; McCracken would probably be there—then his eyes closed and the clanking noises of the engine became music, and he was suddenly walking through a valley that was full of sun and summer and jingling streams, and Muggins was with him, and Muggins had four silver dollars which he threw up in the air, and the dollars became white doves and flew away singing like thrushes. Then Muggins himself began to sing like a thrush, and Tarney was astonished that Muggins could sing so beautifully; but presently Muggins began to play a mouth-organ that made a noise like a steam calliope, and the mountains on either side of the valley hopped angrily toward them and butted together with a mighty crumbling crash, and he awoke and found himself sprawling among stones and divers fragments of Big Susan's cab near Dander station.

The body of Big Susan was on the track, but the tender and the next three cars were splintered and flung awry. Big Susan had the caboose of the first section literally on her horns, with the front end of the caboose jammed through the bay-window of the station into the telegraph office. Several persons had broken bones; Tarney himself had a dislocated shoulder and sundry bruises, but happily no life had been sacrificed to Muggins's "idea."

It was a clear case. Jack Tarney had slept and let his engine into the first section of freight Number 12. Superintendent Burke brought him in "on the carpet," but it was hardly worth while; only one verdict was possible—his "time" and the privilege of looking for employment elsewhere.

Tarney execrated his stupidity and nursed his hurts in ignorance of their primary cause. Lady Mother was shocked and beset with apprehensions. Muggins hid his head under the bedclothes at night, for he most distinctly "saw things." He would fain have unbosomed himself, but the horrifying immensity of the thing—broken bones, wrecked trains, and his father discharged! His hair evinced a pronounced determination to stand on end when he thought of it. What sort of punishment would be meted him for the perpetration of such a crime? That thought also made his hair lift. A six-year-old boy is usually painfully frank; a six-year-old boy confronted by a probable personal cataclysm is sometimes painfully reticent. Muggins grew pale and without appetite, but he kept his great secret. However, his burden grew somewhat lighter upon hearing his father one day comfort Lady Mother with the statement that, as soon as his shoulder was healed, he was going down to the Queen Cove Mine to work, thus assuring them bread until spring, when he would sell the cottage and seek an engineer's position east of the mountains.

It was late in January when Tarney went down to Queen Cove, and in March fell the happening that set things right. On the Western Central the affair is spoken of by many as the strangest accident in the history of the road; by the devout it has been pointed to as a miracle. The writer confesses that to his mind something more than senseless chance and blind coincidence look to have been at work—if these were the only elements, then chance and coincidence call for reverence.

The Queen Cove Mine was oddly situated; had this not been so the miracle—or tragic incident, as you please—could not have fallen. The mine lay in a kind of cove, a wide-lipped bore in the solid base of Silver Mountain, thirty-seven miles east of Paley Fork. At that point the Sandrill River, twisting down from the mountains of the northwest, whips its way into the Cradle Range, cutting southward around the eastern base of Silver Mountain. Doubtless in some former age its obstructed waters gnawed into the foundation of the mountain, leaving the vast excavation known as Queen Cove. This striking example of the power of erosive forces was some four hundred feet wide at the mouth and nearly half a mile deep; its walls jutted outward for the most part and were from six to eight hundred feet high. No human foot had ever scaled those beetling ramparts. Near the most inner point of the great burrow a thin stream, during the wet season, leaped down from the heights and battered itself into mist on the stone floor. At one side a tunnel entered the rock forma-

Look out for "A DUEL OF DETECTIVES; or, THE CONFLICT OF CLEWS," in Next Week's Ledger.

tion, driven in on a narrow vein of gold-bearing conglomerate almost on a level with the floor of the strange inclosure. Working in this small mine were eighteen men; in the cove were three flimsy shacks and a boarding-house shed. The wives and children of three of the miners were housed in the shacks, the other miners were unmarried or had families elsewhere, Jack Tarney, after his arrival, being numbered among the latter.

Running southeastward across the mouth of the cove foamed the cold waters of the Sandrill; the track of the Western Central also crossed its outer opening, squeezed in between the river and the cove. A mile farther down the river lay Bridge Station, a small station, near which the track of the Western Central crossed the Sandrill and made eastward over the main body of the Cradle Range. From the little mine in the cove a mule trail wound down to Bridge Station, following the track and the river, and at that time the ore from the Queen Cove went in sacks by muleback to the station for shipment. That was the situation when Muggins did the deed.

Clearly, if, during the period of high water and ice-flow, the Sandrill should become seriously obstructed and its flood thrown into Queen Cove, as was probably the case when the cove was chiseled out of the mountain, the dwellers there would meet a sorry fate. Never in the known history of the region had this peril fallen, but on the sixteenth day of March, following Tarney's advent at the mine, it came. The Sandrill was straining its banks at that time and was sprinkled with eddying masses of shattered ice. While it was yet dark on that morning some of the sleepers in the little camp in the cove were awakened by the jarring of the mountain and a muffled thunder of noise in the outer canyon. They slept again and awoke in ice-cold water. Acres of snow, breaking from a high shoulder of Silver Mountain and hurling with it scores of pines and train-loads of dirt, and stones, had tobogganed down into Sandrill Canyon, a quarter of a mile below the cove, stopping the flow of the river as by magic. The engorging mass lay across the railroad track and filled the bed of the stream from thirty to fifty feet deep—at points it was two hundred feet wide. Given time, the river would eat a channel through the obstruction, but in the meantime the people in Queen Cove—they were as rats in a flooded hole.

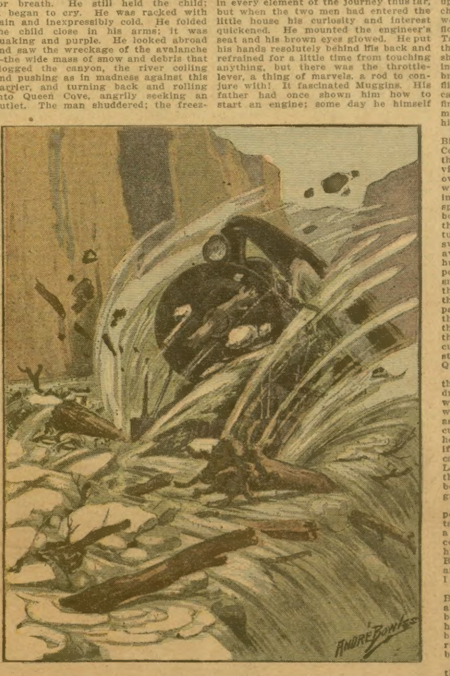
Jack Tarney jumped out of his bunk in water that came to his thighs and out of the door into a flood breast deep. Dawn was breaking and the cove was filled with a greenish light; the vast wall soared about him, furrowed, bulging, dank; the whole area of the cove was awash with a flood the currents of which ran twisting and pushing everywhere; the place echoed with human cries. The chill of the water cut to his marrow. He glanced toward the cove's mouth; the Sandrill was rolling over the railroad track in a steel-gray sheet three hundred feet wide, emptying its impeded waters into the cove in angry madness. Shocked beyond expression by the awful situation, he swayed in the water for a moment, then lunged forward, spurred by the instinct of self-preservation. The long, low building used as a boarding-house lifted and turned over and rolled like a log, crushing and tearing in pieces; the three little shacks were driving toward the inner curve of the cove. A man splashed by Tarney, half-swimming, half-pushing himself by his toes on the rocky bottom.

"What's happened? Where are the women and children?" shouted Tarney.

The man was gulping and strangling. "Most of 'em and most of th' men air in the tunnel—they run in there w'en th' water begun comin' in," he sputtered.

"Fools! They'll be smothered, they'll be drowned like gophers," cried Tarney, turning toward the tunnel. But why should he try to enter the rapidly filling hole, why should he attempt the utterly impossible? A strangling baby washed by him; he grasped it and pushed toward the mouth of the cove. He had not gone fifty feet before he was beyond his depth and fighting for life. He was not an expert swimmer and was compelled to use one hand to hold the child's head above water. Near the railroad track he was swept twice around a long circle by the angry current. As he went round he saw a man sink not far from him and caught a glimpse of objects in the cove; the shacks were rolling and bumping against the jutting walls, mules were struggling in the water and upset wagons washing about; at one side a man and woman were clinging to a projecting ledge; at the farthest point three men and a little girl had drawn themselves up on some knotted humps of stone. The six people he caught sight of possibly were safe, but the human beings in the tunnel! The drift ascended slightly, but if the water rose to a depth of ten feet on the floor of the cove the tunnel would fill solidly to its inner end! Then inevitable death must seize all who had fled into it for safety.

A vision of this glimmered in Tarney's mind as he was borne round in the ice-sprinkled flood, then suddenly he was whipped into a current that was like a mill-race and carried downward between the mountain wall and the water-covered railroad track. He whirled along for perhaps a hundred yards when he was swept into a wide eddy and thrown out upon some projecting rocks, where he clutched fast and drew himself up, struggling hard for breath. He still held the child; it began to cry. He was racked with pain and inexpressibly cold. He folded the child close in his arms; it was quaking and purple. He looked abroad and saw the wreckage of the avalanche—the wide mass of snow and debris that clogged the canyon, the river coiling and pushing as in madness against this barrier, and turning back and rolling into Queen Cove, angrily seeking an outlet. The man shuddered; the freezing flood was wide, a perpendicular wall was at his back, he saw no present means of escape. The rising sun flung a scarlet beam down from the eastern mountains; the fragments of ice seemed to take fire. He thought of the "little white feller" and Muggins and Lady Mother! they must be getting up about now. Should he ever see them again?



The engine burst through the obstruction.

But Lady Mother and Muggins had been up for quite two hours. That was delightful destiny—to the imperiled folk in Queen Cove really the greatest thing that ever happened. Muggins was coming down to see his father, and the fashion and sequence of his journey is one of the great stories of the Western Central. Bob Hammond, who now handled the throttle of Tarney's engine, was bringing the young hater of soothing-syrup down to the cove. Lady Mother, with many expressed hopes that he might be a good boy and not get into mischief, had brought Muggins over to the yards and put him aboard Big Susan at 5:15 in the morning. Bob was taking Big Susan through to Barn Butte to bring a special west; he would take good care of Muggins and drop him off at the cove all right, he said. Muggins, jocund with glee and expectation, climbed up on the fireman's side of the cab, and Big Susan rolled out through the switches.

She tramped along the track down Paley Valley steadily that morning, followed the steel through the hills that fringe the Cradle Range, then climbed around to the north side of Silver Mountain. Here, at High Pine station, Hammond shut off and jumped to the ground. Daylight was upon the world, a glory was welling over the eastern mountains like blood-red smoke.

"Come on, Turner," he shouted to the fireman; "let's get some coffee at Mother Mason's; she's up, I see. Nothing leaving the Fork until 8:20 and Number 6 isn't due at Bridge Station until 7:06; let the engine stand. You never had any of Mother Mason's coffee? Well, it's the juice all right. She pounds the coffee fine and hangs it in a bag in the pot and lets it drip; great stuff. Say, kid, you had better come along, too."

Muggins shook his head. He was munching a fried cake and had his organs of speech fully occupied.

"Well, don't monkey with things," said Hammond, as he and the fireman started across the right of way to Mother Mason's.

Muggins had been deeply interested in every element of the journey thus far, but when the two men had entered the little house his curiosity and interest quickened. He mounted the engineer's seat and his brown eyes glowed. He put his hands resolutely behind his back and refrained for a little time from touching anything, but there was the throttle-lever, a thing of marvels, a rod to conjure with! It fascinated Muggins. His father had once shown him how to start an engine; some day he himself was going to be an engineer; why should he not begin practicing? He laid hold of the shining iron and gripped and pushed and tugged at it. Suddenly it went over a bit, and as suddenly steam spouted from the exhaust cocks, and Big Susan moved away, making for Queen Cove and her part in the Queen Cove tragedy.

Through a little space Muggins laughed and rejoiced, then he glanced back and saw two men burst out from Mother Mason's door, hatless, white-faced, yelling. He essayed to stop the engine then, but could not; panic, fiery, terrifying, gripped him. He cried aloud and ran back and forth across the fuel-deck, the world was whirling rearward on either side of him; he crept into the gangway and looked down, the earth flowed back beneath him in a gray and dizzying sheet; he crept into the cab and scrambled to the fireman's seat and hid his face in the cushion, calling wildly on Lady Mother. Every atom of the mighty engine seemingly began to hum and roar. Thirteen miles to Queen Cove and every foot of it down grade! In three minutes Big Susan began to ring her bell, she rocked and rolled so violently. Using steam and carried downward by her vast weight, at the end of five miles she had attained a frightful speed. Muggins, pallid and wild-eyed, simply clutched fast to whatever was handiest. The long-nosed oil-cans leaped in their racks, coal shot back and forth across the tender, the smoke from the stack streamed flat along the boiler, the exhausts pulsed like fluttering hearts. Downward the engine rushed, since time began one of man's most beautiful and terrible creations. On the curves all her iron clanged and quivered; on the short, straight stretches she sprang forward as if leaping to meet some mighty task. Did angels, invisible to human eyes, fly before her, leading her to the rescue of the imperilled creatures at Queen Cove? Was some shielding power thrown round the little being in the engine cab in that wild hour? Who may say? In the boy's mind was only terror and confusion; he gasped and cried aloud and was pitched from side to side. In the world around him the mountains seemed to rise and twist, huge spurs of rock fell and melted and rushed rearward, the very framework of things seemed hurling into chaos.

Down in Queen Cove the people in the tunnel, driven to its inner end, were up to their armpits in water; men held children on their shoulders, women were crying. Death whispered in the flooded cavern. Out in the canyon Jack Tarney hung among the cold rocks, the rescued baby in his arms; they shook and quivered together. The rising water heaved and turned and broadened, then sounds fell upon it, a flight of echoes sweeping down the canyon, palpitating, swelling, bursting finally into jarring thunder, then the man saw that which will remain with him until his last breath.

Like a creature from another world Big Susan crossed the mouth of Queen Cove. She seemed flying; the water that covered the rails, smitten and divided by her hurling front, dashed up over her fifty feet high and bent backward like enormous glittering wings; immediately about her black body, springing up from the inundated fire-box, rolled a white cloud of steam; thus like some sort of stupendous creature, borne on crystal pinions, she swooped against the prone body of the avalanche. Her speed was surely a hundred miles an hour, and her 270,000 pounds of iron tore away through the snow and debris as a bullet might tear through paper. Tarney was covered by the water that fell behind her as she passed; he heard an indescribable, thunderous crash, and looked and saw the pent waters of the river rolling out through the great gash Big Susan had cut in the barrier, and knew that life still remained the heritage of all in Queen Cove.

They found Big Susan lying against the side of Silver Mountain three hundred feet below the snowslide. She was stripped from end to end. In the wreck of the cab lay Muggins, white as snow and as still. Both of the seat cushions were around him—whether he placed them there he does not know; if they protected him or not no man can tell. Afterward, when he lay in Lady Mother's bed in Paley Fork and the company's surgeon said he would be all right in a week or two, he began to cry.

"I wants t' 'fess," he sobbed; "I poured th' sleep-stuff in Pa's coffee-tank, so I did. He said he could drink a quart of the ole stuff, he did, and he couldn't, so he couldn't, an' it sleeped him, so it did, an' I'm sorry, so I am. But Big Susan can run thess faster an' anything, so she can; I found it out, so I did."

Lady Mother sent for Superintendent Burke and Burke sent for Jack Tarney, and after a time, when Big Susan had been put through the shops, Jack again held her throttle, but no run ever made by Tarney quite equaled the historic run made by his son Muggins when he broke the dam at Queen Cove.

This story is from the pen of the author of two books of railroad stories that we heartily recommend to Ledger readers. One of the books is "The Diamond Key, and the Railroad Heroes Who Won It." The other book is "Young Heroes of Wire and Rail." These books recount many thrilling and extraordinary acts of heroism by telegraph operators and train dispatchers and engineers and conductors. If you like to read exciting railroad stories you ought to send for both of these splendid books. They are beautifully bound and finely illustrated, and each book contains nearly 400 pages of matter that will make you sit up and take notice. If you wish to make a birthday present to any one, or would like yourself to be wonderfully entertained, you should send for one or both of these books. "Young Heroes of Wire and Rail" is $1.00. "The Diamond Key, and the Railroad Heroes Who Won It," $1.00. Address Lee & Shepard, Publishers, 93 Federal street, Boston, Mass.

* * *

Saw for Herself.

In a certain Arkansas logging camp the company maintains a physician who attends the residents of the camp, and also the families of such employes as live back in the hills. One day he was summoned to the home of a newly-hired native, with the assurance that he was "wanted powerful bad."

With all haste he started, winding up one rough hollow after another, where the road was a mere tradition, and came at last to a decrepit log house. As he opened the gate a hungry-looking woman came to the door and called:

"Be yo' the comp'ny doctor?"

"Yes, I'm the doctor. Who is sick?"

"Don't reckon thar's nobody sick, doctor."

"Well, why in the world did you send for me if no one is sick?"

"Hit's this way, doctor; we-uns is on the puny order a right smart, an' mought need yo' most any time. My ole man said yo' sure would come whenever we sent for yo'; but he's such a no 'count liar thet I dassen't trust his sayso, so I wanted to see fo' myse'f. An' yere yo be!"

King of the World

Or, THE GREAT WAR'S END

By Conrad Kallone

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CHAPTER VII.

LUDWIG felt relieved when he and Waldron were aboard the fast night express from Washington. He knew Smith had not followed him, and was confident no other person had clung to his trail. He had wired in cipher to his shop foreman, Brady, to have everything in readiness for a test, and he was sure no one but Brady could decipher the telegram. The President, accompanied by the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy, would slip quietly aboard the presidential steam yacht after dark that evening and steam northward. They would not reach Gloucester until after Ludwig would have ample time to complete all preparations to make a quick test and allow them to leave within a few hours—before their presence might be suspected by sharp-nosed newspaper men.

The only thing that worried him was the enigmatical speech of Isabel Keppler just before she had bade him a laughing good-by the evening before at the hotel. It irritated him to think how she persisted in coming into his mind. Waldron noticed this irritation, but thought it was because Ludwig was nervous.

"You can talk to me if it will do you any good, Graham," the correspondent said magnanimously, concealing a great curiosity under an appearance of friendly diffidence.

"Thanks," Ludwig responded dryly. "Of course you don't care specially about knowing it, but I may tell you now that we are going to Gloucester to make a test of my war-destroying device in the presence of the President of the United States and his Secretaries of War and the Navy. You're not surprised."

"My dear Ludwig," Waldron answered slowly, "since a newspaper man is always hoping and hunting for unexpected things, unusual things, it would not be strictly logical for him to be surprised when some such turns up."

"Which means you are not surprised?"

"Which means that I am very much interested."

"Huh!" Ludwig snorted. "You speak as if it was a very ordinary affair you were going to witness."

"I would be much more excited if you had not placed me under the promise to keep my typewriter silent about what I am to see," Waldron rejoined. "Under the circumstances I refuse to get excited, and since I'm sleepy and you've nothing more you'll tell me, I'm going to bed."

Ludwig found everything in shipshape at the shop, which they reached the following forenoon. Brady, a stocky, stolid man with an intelligent face, met them at the entrance to the shop, which was outside the limits of Gloucester, upon a rocky point overlooking the bay.

"Your wire came last night, Mr. Ludwig, and we worked till nearly midnight to get things ready. Something important doing today?"

He asked the question with mild interest, as if he was doing only what was expected of him, rather than because he was curious. His squeaky treble voice, coming from the big body, startled Waldron and caused him to take more notice of the foreman.

"Yes, Brady," Ludwig replied. "An important test sometime today. No visitors allowed unless accompanied by me or Mr. Waldron here, or unless presenting a written order from me. Please pass this along and tell all the boys that it must be strictly enforced."

"Yes, sir."

The foreman carried their bags to the little office just off the large room that served as an outer working-room for Ludwig and a reception-room combined. Through the large window that occupied almost all of the front wall the harbor of Gloucester was in full view. Ludwig's private office also had a large window which gave a similar full sweep of the water. The correspondent investigated while his friend was busy at his desk.

The high board fence which encircled the shop grounds went down to the water's edge just in front of the window. In a little basin, protected by a rude breakwater, were several small vessels. Waldron surmised they were all power launches, though all were rather small and constructed along peculiar lines, except one which might be a cruising launch.

The large front room opened at the rear into a barnlike structure which had been fitted up as a small factory and machine shop. Waldron stood in the opened door and for a few minutes watched the half-dozen men working under the direction of Brady. The correspondent's knowledge of machinery was limited, but he recognized bits of wireless outfits and things which he thought must be utilized in the manufacture of small boats, explosive shells and other implements of destruction. It seemed a busy place, and all of the workmen apparently were skilled men and interested in their tasks.

Presently he stepped down the two stairs leading into the big room and walked slowly between the benches and pieces of machinery until he reached Brady at the far end. The foreman, who was busy at a long steel cigar-shaped body bigger than a man, glanced up and scowled. The frown vanished when he recognized Waldron, and he murmured that he had thought at first it was a stranger.

"That looks like a torpedo," Waldron said.

"An' it ain't disguised, either," Brady retorted. "That's just what it is. Pretty much like the improved Whitehead torpedo that most navies use. It's Mr. Ludwig's special pet just now."

"Oh, that's it." Waldron was impressed with the feeling of disappointment. "But if it's like the torpedoes all the countries use, why should he think so highly of it?"

"Now, that's his secret, sir," Brady answered quickly. "He tells us just what to do, but he don't tell us why. You'll notice, if you'll take a peep inside, that we've left a square place vacant, about eighteen inches each way, back near the motor and steering gear." Waldron looked and nodded. "That's where he puts the heart of his little devil." The foreman spoke proudly, but Waldron thought he detected a slight feeling of resentment. "None of us know what's inside the little box he puts that and connects with the motor. I guess nobody knows but him—and he's not telling anybody."

"Wireless receiver?" Waldron asked, remembering Ludwig's talk at the club about his work on a process for localizing and confining wireless wave impulses.

"Don't know," Brady replied, a little sullenly.

He returned to his work, and the correspondent saw that he was in no mood for further talk. He passed on out of the machine shop to find that the tall fence inclosed a rather large area—a couple of acres he thought. At one point—the side nearest the town—the fence was quite near the building, and a single door was here, not far from a little shed lean-to that was next to the wall of the reception-room. The double gates that formed the main entrance to the grounds were some distance away, and around a little turn of the fence.

The correspondent would not have noted these unimportant details had he not seen a tall man, muffled to his ears in a long overcoat, with a soft slouch hat pulled far down over his forehead, slip through the single door as if wishing to escape observation, and walk quickly across to the lean-to. Waldron, wondering if he had escaped the watch which Ludwig had ordered kept to bar out strangers, was about to go to the lean-to, when his attention was arrested by the sight of a steam yacht, far out from the harbor entrance, that reminded him of the Mayflower. Immediately he forgot the man and began to watch the vessel. Presently he was sure it was the President's yacht, and he hurried back to the office.

In the preparations to bring the President and his party in from the yacht, Waldron forgot about the suspicious-looking man in the lean-to. Ludwig was too busy to have paid any attention had he mentioned the matter. He called Brady, and the three hurried to the pier and boarded the cruising launch.

"The yacht will anchor far out," Ludwig explained, "and we'll bring them ashore in our launch—as an extra precaution against discovery. Even if we should be seen going out and returning, it will not be suspected that we have such important people aboard."

"We'll say it is—" Waldron paused and looked grinningly at Brady—"it is the King of Ireland."

"He's just as likely to be here as anywhere," the foreman retorted.

Long before they reached the Mayflower Waldron was surprised to sight two other ships farther out. He pointed them out to Ludwig.

"Look like warships. Guard of honor?"

"They're all war vessels, discarded for age, and used for target practice." Ludwig spoke slowly and softly so that Brady did not hear the words. "I had them sent along for use here in my tests."

"Expensive experimenting, I call it," Waldron replied.

"Nothing else would do," his friend retorted. "Theorizing will not answer questions about how a thing will work. All of us, from the President down or the President up, want to be shown. We might all be from Missouri."

The President and his two Cabinet officers were at the rail waiting for them when the launch drew alongside. With them was a woman, cloaked and heavily veiled, whom neither of the men recognized. Waldron ventured the surmise that she was the confidential stenographer for one of them. She was not presented.

In silence the four boarded the launch, and in silence they made the return trip. There was a feeling of tenseness in the situation that seemed to make every one want to be quiet for fear of screaming if a word was spoken.

When they reached the front door, Ludwig sent Brady off to double the guard and order a stricter watch to be kept to prevent the entrance of any one into the grounds, until after the visitors had returned to the yacht. Waldron thought he detected a slight look of resentment in the foreman's eyes when he turned to carry out this order. At the same time he remembered the man in the lean-to, and was half-conscious of a feeling of suspicion against the foreman. He decided to warn Ludwig afterward, and in the meantime watch Brady closely.

Ludwig led the party straight into his private office, where, with a few preliminary formalities, he explained his plan. The eyes of his auditors opened wider and wider as he spoke. The Secretary of the Navy seemed more impressed than the others, for he had not previously discussed the matter with the inventor. The woman seemed laboring under great excitement, and finally turned away and walked to the window.

"You may take off your veil now," the Secretary of War said. "There is no danger now of your being recognized. It will be more comfortable."

When she took advantage of the permission and turned toward them again, Ludwig cried out in surprise and the correspondent giggled. She was Isabel Keppler.

"One of my confidential stenographers," the Secretary of War explained. "One of the few we can trust."

"I'm glad to meet you again, Miss Keppler," the inventor said stiffly, surprise struggling with chagrin.

"Mr. Ludwig suspected me of being a German spy," Isabel said, with a gentle laugh. "That's why he is so surprised to see me here."

The Secretary laughed good-naturedly. "Why, she's been one of my very best and most trustworthy employes, Mr. Ludwig. Your secret is safer with her than it is with me."

"I'm mighty glad to hear that," Ludwig answered fervently.

"Me, too, Pete," Waldron added.

"Gentlemen," the President said, with quiet dignity, "perhaps we had best proceed with the test, since it is not advisable for us to remain here longer than is necessary."

Instantly every one became very active. Ludwig led them out into the reception-room and placed chairs for the five—including one for the correspondent—in front of the big window.

"From here you can see everything," he explained. He handed each a pair of binoculars. "It's a clear day, but the glasses will help you to see better. Remember, the first ship is twenty-three miles away and her magazines are partly filled. The second will be a little farther out, and she will be without any explosive aboard."

"Where'll you sit, Graham?" Waldron asked.

"I'll be in my little office directing affairs."

"With your little square box?"

"Yes. Who told you about that?" Ludwig was surprised.

"Brady—out in the shop."

"The little square box contains the secret of my invention," Ludwig explained. "Since I desire this secret to remain unknown to any one but myself for the present, I'll ask his excellency to excuse me if I retire to my private office. I might add that everything I am about to do here I can do at any place and without any special preparation—a statement I am prepared to prove upon demand."

He spoke with a confident dignity that was impressive, and turned slowly to his private office. A moment later he emerged with a square box which he carried outside and down to the pier. In the water floated one of the torpedoes like the one Waldron had seen Brady working upon. It had been carried down from the shop while the party was in Ludwig's office. The inventor examined it carefully and then placed the box in the space that had been left for it, near the motor and steering gear. The metal roof was then securely screwed on and the machine was deposited in the shallow water. The people in the building watched in silence. When Ludwig returned their faces were full of eager questions, but no one spoke.

"Fired from a submarine the velocity of the torpedo would be much greater, of course, at first," the inventor explained, "but it will work."

He excused himself and passed into the private office, and through the open door they saw him unlock the great safe that stood against the wall and draw forth a box similar to the one he had placed in the torpedo, but larger. He brought it out and showed it to them, explaining without telling anything:

"The secret of the control of the torpedo is in this box. I regulate the course and speed of the projectile by means of these buttons, each of which operates a lever on the inside. The propulsive energy is discharged through this little opening in front, and is collected and concentrated through a similar opening in the box which I placed in the projectile."

"But the torpedo will be under water, and without an aerial medium to conduct the wireless waves," the Secretary of War protested.

"The waves of energy will pass through the water with almost as much ease as through the air," Ludwig explained patiently. "I have guarded successfully against any interruption or interception of these wave impulses. They are absolutely and at all times under my control. I can send them where I wish. Wait a few minutes and watch those old war vessels, and you will see that I am not theorizing only. Watch the nearest vessel first. It has explosives upon it. It will be destroyed first. Then the second, which contains nothing that can cause it to destroy itself. It will go next."

He retired to the little office, shutting the door behind him. The four men and one woman watched the distant vessel, scarcely winking, so intense were they and so fascinated by expectancy.

Fifteen minutes later the test was completed. With a triumphant look in his face the inventor emerged from his little room and looked at the awestricken five. Their faces showed him instantly how clearly they appreciated the wonder and the far reaching effect of his invention. The President was the first to find the use of his tongue. He gravely shook Ludwig's hand and spoke in a subdued tone:

"It is enough, Mr. Ludwig. You have convinced us. With that power in the hands of the United States, and the fact known to the world, we can compel all other countries to keep the peace."

"And it will become known," the inventor replied, in a half-whisper, "just as soon as Congress approves the contract you are willing to make with me."

The destruction of the two ships outside the harbor had become known to the residents of the city, and that place already was in great turmoil. Ludwig saw crowds hurrying to the docks and suggested that his party return immediately to the yacht before their presence should become known.

"The newspapers will have their reporters out here in a few minutes," he explained. "And I do not want it known to the public, or to the world at large, that you are negotiating with me, until after the contracts are signed and approved. I'm sorry if I seem inhospitable," he added smilingly.

They were aboard the cruising launch and nearly out to the yacht before the arrival of the first curious reporter at the grounds. He was not admitted. The watchman informed him that Mr. Ludwig was not at the plant, and it wasn't known when he would return. Other inquirers were met with the same stolid refusal of admission.

The awed restraint which the test had thrown over those who had witnessed it had not entirely left when Ludwig and Waldron assisted the President and his party from the launch aboard the yacht. The Secretary of War briefly made an appointment to confer with the inventor the third day afterward, in the President's office, at which time he promised to have the contract ready for signing.

"I have not enjoyed this afternoon, especially, Mr. Ludwig," the President said slowly, "but I wish to thank you for a very interesting time, and to congratulate you on your desire to utilize your invention in the interest of establishing a permanent world peace."

They gravely shook hands with Ludwig and the correspondent. Isabel, who had scarcely spoken during the afternoon, had been holding back, but came forward when the men had completed their farewells. She held out her hand to Ludwig and spoke slowly:

"Mr. Ludwig, I hope you will not think I was trying to play with you. It did not seem wise for me to let even you know that I was in the employ of our Uncle Samuel."

"Now, don't you worry over that, Miss Keppler," Waldron interposed.

"No, I'm so glad to know who you are and what you are doing that I haven't any time to feel hurt," Graham responded.

"I'm glad," the girl said simply. She leaned closer and dropped her voice to a whisper: "Watch out for Schmidt. I think he had an idea of what you were going to do today and believe he has come down here."

"He can learn nothing," Graham answered confidently. "I hold all my secret in my mind."

"But he can do something," the girl replied earnestly. "When he knows what you have, and that it may be used against the Fatherland—oh, you needn't be surprised that I've guessed that—why, he may decide to do the next best thing to getting the secret."

"Why, what's that?" Graham was surprised.

"Put you in a position where you cannot use it against him."

The inventor smiled, again thanked her for her warning, bowed to the men, and he and Waldron returned to the launch.

At the pier, while Brady was tying up the launch, Ludwig asked the correspondent to join him in a walk to the rocky point, about half a mile off, to test his wireless message improvement.

"I want to see if I can get the Mayflower for a confidential chat," he explained.

"But your box—you haven't that," Waldron protested.

"No, that's in my private office," the inventor answered. "I don't use that for message sending; it's too powerful. I've a little 'pocket' sender and receiver for that purpose. Niftiest little thing you ever saw. Isn't it, Brady?"

"Yes, sir," the foreman answered respectfully, "though I've never seen its insides."

"Nobody has, Jim," Ludwig laughed. "You've seen it work though."

"Yes, sir," Brady answered.

"Come on, then," Waldron interrupted, "and let me see it work."

After telling Brady they would be back in half or three-quarters of an hour, and instructing him to maintain the strict guard upon the place in the meantime, Ludwig turned eastward, with the correspondent at his heels. They climbed around the end of the fence that projected out upon a framework over the water, and struck off along the narrow path toward the point.

It was nearly an hour later when they returned. Ludwig passed into the private office, his face shining with elation over the manner in which his small wireless message sender and receiver had worked. His friend accompanied him.

"I'll just put it in the safe with the impulse director," the inventor said.

He swung the heavy door—which had not been locked—open and reached in for the box. A blank look spread over his face. He turned to Waldron and gasped:

"It's gone!"

CHAPTER VIII.

TOM WALDRON'S chubby face was the picture of blank astonishment when Ludwig announced that the wonderful box had disappeared. He looked so miserable that the inventor laughed at him, and the laugh caused the correspondent to recall, with a start, the tall, suspicious-looking man he had seen slip across the grounds and disappear into the lean-to.

Shouting to Ludwig to follow, Waldron darted out of the office, across the reception-room to the exit door, and ran around the house to the lean-to. He jerked the door open and peered in—at nothing but a pile of scraps of iron, steel, copper, woodwork, etc.

"What's the matter with you?" Ludwig demanded.

Then Waldron explained. The inventor whistled.

"I intended to speak to you about it immediately, but things kept happening that made me forget," the correspondent said contritely. "Of course he's the fellow that got the box—and I might have saved it if I hadn't been such a ninny."

"Oh, don't get all wrought up about it, Wally." Graham's tone was gentle.

"But the box is gone!" the correspondent cried. "Your secret!"

"Tut, tut!" Ludwig chuckled. "Suppose he has stolen it for—for Schmidt. It will do him no good."

"I—I don't understand," Waldron gasped. "I thought the mechanism for working your invention was in that box."

"Only part of it," Ludwig replied patiently. "You see, I've made this thing so it will be most difficult for any one to get the secret. All the machinery is in that box, but the real secret, the master key, the heart of it, you might call it, is not there—now."

"But——" Waldron stammered.

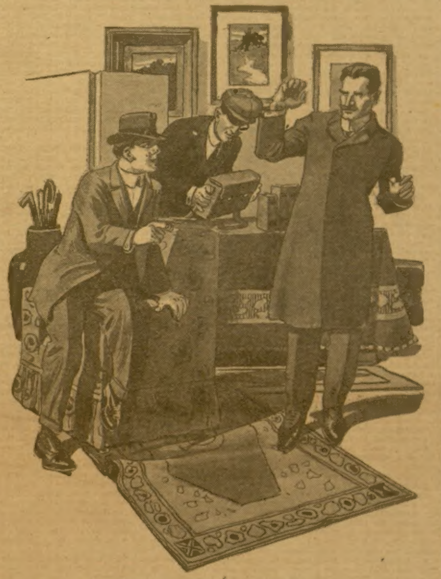
"You see, there's another little box," the inventor went on slowly. "It is small enough to go in my pocket. It is the vitalizer of the machinery in the larger box, the thing that starts the machinery to operate. If I could explain it to you, you wouldn't understand. It's too technical and too new. I had that little thing with me when we tested the wireless message instrument just now at the point. I never allow it to remain in the impulse box except when that box is in my own hands."

"Oh, then the thief will not be able to use it!" Waldron felt relieved.

"No, he cannot use it, but all the same I want to know who he is and to get it back." The inventor looked very determined. "I can make another in a couple of weeks, but I do not wish to lose that, even if it will do no one else any good. Come."

The inventor acted and spoke with great rapidity for the next quarter of an hour, questioning nearly all of the employes about the stranger, without finding one who admitted having seen him. Then he called Brady and repaired to the office. There he gave the foreman a keen look before saying very slowly:

"Brady, I want you to tell me everything you know about this matter. Wait—" he held up his hand as the man started to speak. "You've been with me a long time and I've trusted you. I still trust you. If you've made a slip I'm willing to accept your explanation that you didn't intend to harm me or my work in any way. But I should like to have the truth, Jim."



Smith was checked suddenly.

The foreman shifted uneasily from one foot to the other, tried to return Ludwig's look steadily, and finally stammered, half-embarrassed, half-defiant:

"I don't know anything—much."

"No—but how much?" Graham smiled encouragingly.

"Well—not enough to hurt."

"You know about that man slipping through the side gate and hiding in the lean-to," the inventor asserted patiently. He smiled when he saw the man's startled expression. "Come now, Jim, and make a clean breast of it."

Encouraged by his employer's kindly tone and manner, the foreman, his face flushing, began awkwardly:

"Well, sir, when he came up to me after I'd stepped outside the fence to take a look about—as usual you know, sir—and spoke to me pleasantly. I never suspected him of being anything else than what he said he was."

"And what was that, Jim?"

"A newspaper reporter, sir. Said he'd learned in Washington that you were going to make a test of the new—you know, sir—for some big Government guns, and he wanted to be where he could watch the proceedings and get a good story at first hand. Of course I told him right off that he could stay outside, but he kept persuading me. Said it would mean a big feather in his cap and a raise in salary, and he needed it because he had a wife and kid and an old sick mother to support. Besides, Mr. Ludwig, I knew he wouldn't find out anything more on the inside than out—that is about how you was doing it—and so so—so——"

"So you just turned your head while he slipped through?"

"Yes, sir, that's about what happened, sir."

"He didn't try to bribe you, Brady?"

"I should say he never!" Brady spoke indignantly. "I'd knocked his block off if he had."

"Of course," Ludwig smiled. "And you didn't see him again?"

"Not until I was coming up from the pier. Met him coming out of the building with his camera case. He pretended to be a traveling photographer looking for you to get photographs of you—a couple of the men were not far off, you see, and he did it for a blind. Said he wouldn't wait, but would come tomorrow, and walked out through the front gates."

"And, Jim," the inventor spoke slowly, "in that camera case he carried my impulse discharge and control box."

"I'm afraid so, Mr. Ludwig." The foreman was very contrite. "I thought that as soon as you began asking questions. I'd feel a lot worse if I didn't know it wouldn't do him any good. I've had that box taken apart too many times, looking for the things that made it work, without finding it, to be afraid it'll do him any good."

"No, he can't use it," Ludwig replied. "All the same I'm sorry to lose it. And somebody might happen to learn the same secret that I found. So I'm anxious to get that box back as soon as possible, and I want you to think hard and try to remember something about the man that will identify him if I can lay my eyes on him. What did he look like?"

Brady tried eagerly to give a description, but soon appreciated the fact that it might apply to any tall man.

"I—that's about all I can say about him, Mr. Ludwig," he concluded weakly.

"Not much help, is it, Waldron?" The inventor smiled encouragingly. "Try again, Jim. Wasn't there something about him that would mark him from other men? Some mark by which you could easily identify him? Something about his face or—his hands."

"That's it, sir!" Brady exclaimed. "His right hand. I remember it now, as plain as anything. Noticed it when he was talking to me and holding his camera case."

"Little finger?" Waldron interrupted.

"Little finger," Brady replied eagerly. "It was crooked a little bit, like the skin was too tight across the middle joint."

"That's a good identification," Ludwig said. "We'll go right after him. He'll be likely to hurry back to Washington. Jim, get a taxi for us as soon as possible. We'll catch the evening express if we hurry. And mind, Jim, don't say a word about this to anybody."

The foreman, overjoyed that he had escaped without even a censure, nodded with eager gratitude and hurried to the telephone to order the automobile.

"He'll go to Washington, of course," Ludwig said to the correspondent. "We ought to get there as soon as he does. The express will get us there ahead of him if he travels by local trains. If he takes it straight to the German ambassador we may have a hard time to recover it. If he takes it to his room first, we'll have a better chance."

"An even break," the correspondent asserted. "Naturally he will assume that he will be free from suspicion for a few hours, at least, and will not think it possible for us to suspect him and get back to Washington and to his rooms ahead of him. So that's what we'll do—the thing he'll not expect."

"Wally," the inventor said with laughing admiration, "you should have been a diplomat or a detective."

"Really successful newspaper men must be a little of both," he answered sententiously. "But afterward—what?"

"You mean after we get the box back?"

"Or we don't," the correspondent corrected.

"There's just one afterward for me, Wally. After my contracts with the Government are signed, then I shall be free to act in this European business—then I'll end it all in a short while."

"If you'd told me that last night, or even this morning, I should have laughed at you, Graham." The correspondent was very grave. "Now I don't laugh. I only ask, when will you start, and at what place, and through what channel?"

"In four days from now," the inventor said slowly, "you and I will be aboard an ocean steamer bound for Europe—London probably—ostensibly as war correspondents for your New York Star."

"I'm too fat," Waldron answered wearily. "Like to go along, Graham, but I'm afraid the excitement will be too much for me."

"You are going," Graham asserted. "You've got to go, as my instructor, or I'll be getting into all sorts of trouble because of not knowing what a war correspondent ought to do."

"War correspondents don't do anything in this war except write long articles about what they haven't been allowed to do," Waldron replied smilingly. "I can write that stuff in Washington as well as forty miles from the battle front in Flanders. No, thanks, Graham, I think I'll stay where I know my meals and sleeping hours will be regular."

"And I think you will go along with me," Graham answered confidently. "I'm quite sure that you will want to be on the ground where you can get the inside story of the ending of this war—don't you?"

Waldron stared at his friend. Then, as the real meaning of the inventor's plan dawned upon him, a look of awed eagerness came into his bright eyes.

"I'll go," he said, just as Brady announced the arrival of the taxi.

The two men sat up until long after midnight in the drawing-room of the sleeper, making the plans for the trip. For the time being Schmidt was forgotten, but at a quarter after one the correspondent mentioned him and suggested that since he would have to be handled first, it might be well for them to get some sleep to be fresh for the task.

They hurried from the train at Washington, jumped into a taxicab, and headed for the boarding-house district where Schmidt lived. They had taken a quick survey of the debarking passengers, but had not seen the tall German agent, and were confident they had stolen a march on him. At the corner, just around the street upon which Schmidt's boarding-house faced, they stopped, told the chauffeur to wait, and walked the rest of the way.

The landlady knew Mr. Waldron as one of Mr. Schmidt's intimate friends—intimate enough, at least, to have visited him in his rooms, to which he had come with a freedom that bespoke intimacy. No, the landlady said in reply to their inquiry, Mr. Smith was not in. He had been absent a couple of nights, but she expected him back that morning.

"I'm sure he'll be here before long," Waldron replied. "I want to see him as soon as possible, on important business, so, if you have no objection, we'll go up and wait for him. Needn't bother to tell him we are here. We want to surprise him."

She interposed no objection, and the two men went upstairs to the third floor, where Smith had a large living-room, from which opened his sleeping quarters, consisting of a tiny bedroom and bath. The bedroom was curtained off from the living-room. Waldron arranged that the inventor should conceal himself behind the curtain when he heard Smith approaching, and show himself at the proper moment. The correspondent seated himself in the large easy-chair, arranged so that any one entering the room would not notice him until he had taken several steps inside. He began to read the morning paper.

Half an hour later they heard footsteps in the hall, and Ludwig darted behind the curtains. A moment later Schmidt entered. Waldron could not see him, but the inventor could, and he was relieved at the sight of the camera case, which evidently seemed quite heavy. Schmidt had brought the box to his room first. The man slammed the door shut and set down the case with a grunt. He turned toward the center of the room and started at sight of Waldron, leaning over the arm of the chair, and peering back at him.

"Gee, but you're noisy, Smith," the correspondent said easily.

"What the devil are you doing here?" The man stepped angrily toward Waldron.

"Waiting for you," the correspondent replied easily. "Thought you might show up soon, so decided to wait." He pointed to the case. "Didn't know you were an amateur photographer. Get something good?"

"Yes." Schmidt grinned.

(Continued on page nineteen.)

Gold and the Girl

Or, A Cattle Man's Grit

By Wilder Anthony

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CHAPTER XVI.

BY A WOMAN'S WIT.

"KIDNAPED? Gordon Wade?"

At Dorothy's tearful announcement of the fact Mrs. Purnell sank, with a gasp, into her rocking-chair, astonished beyond further words. She listened, with anxiety scarcely less than her daughter's, to the girl's account of the happening, as she had it from Trowbridge. Her mouth opened and shut aimlessly as she picked at her gingham apron. If Wade had been her own son she could scarcely have loved him more, and might, indeed, have loved him less. He had been as tender to her as a son, and the news of his disappearance was a frightful shock to her, especially in her condition of health. Weakly, she attempted to relieve her own anxiety by disputing the fact of his danger.

"Oh, I guess nothing's happened to him—nothing like that, anyway. He may have had a fall from his horse. Or maybe it broke away from him and ran off."

"Santry found their trail," Dorothy said, with a gesture so poignantly tragic that it wrung the mother's heartstrings. "He followed it as far as he could and lost it." In any other cause she would have tried to keep the news from her mother, because of her nerves, but now the girl was too distraught to think of any one but the man she loved. "Oh, if I could only do something myself! It's staying here, helpless, that'll be hardest of all. I wish I'd gone with Lem up into the mountains. He said that I might find out something here that he'd want to know, but how can I? There's nothing here."

"The idea!" Mrs. Purnell spoke sharply. "He'll likely be away all night. How could you have stayed with him? I don't believe Gordon's been kidnaped at all. There's common sense to all things. Who'd have done it to him?"

"Who?" The question wore upon Dorothy's patience. "Who's done everything that's abominable and contemptible lately in Moondance? Moran did it, of course, with Senator Rexhill behind him. Oh!"

"Stuff!" said her mother, crossly.

"Lem thinks so. Everybody does!"

"Then he hasn't got as good sense as I thought he had." Mrs. Purnell arose and moved toward the little kitchen. "You come on and help me make some flapjacks for supper. Maybe that'll take such foolishness out of your head. The idea of a Senator of the United States going about kidnaping people."

Dorothy obeyed her mother's wish, but not very ably. Her face was flushed and her eyes hot; ordinarily she was a splendid little housekeeper and a dutiful daughter, but there are limits to the human will. She mixed the batter so clumsily and with such prodigal waste, that her mother stopped her; and was about to put salt into the sugar-bowl, when Mrs. Purnell took it away from her.

"Go into the dining-room and sit down, Dorothy. You're beside yourself," she said. But it is frequently the way with people, who are getting on in years and are sick, to charge their own shortcomings upon whoever may be near. Mrs. Purnell was greatly worried.

"What's the matter now?" she demanded, when Dorothy left her supper untasted before her.

"I was thinking."

"Well, can't you tell a body what you're thinking about? What are you sitting there that way for?"

"I was wondering," said Dorothy in despair, "if Helen Rexhill knows where Gordon is."

Mrs. Purnell snorted in disdain. "Land's sakes, what put that into your head? Drink your tea. It'll do you good."

"Why shouldn't she know, if her father does?" Dorothy pushed the teacup further from her. "She wouldn't have come all the way out here with him—he wouldn't have brought her with him—if they weren't chummy together. Maybe she knows. But I don't see why——"

"Dorothy Purnell, I declare to goodness, I believe you're going crazy." Mrs. Purnell's flapjack fell from the fork grasped by her nerveless fingers. "All this about Gordon is hard enough on me without my being worried——"

"I'd give him up to her, if she'd tell me for that." The girl's voice was hollow with grief. "I know she thinks I've come between her and Gordon, but I haven't meant to. He's just seemed to like me best. But I'd do anything to save him from Moran."

"I reckon you'd better wait until he asks you before you talk about giving him up to somebody else." Mrs. Purnell spoke with the excoriating scorn of the nervous invalid.

Her daughter made no response to the contemptuous tone. She had never mentioned at home the night in Moran's office, and so her mother knew nothing of Wade's kiss. But to the girl it had meant more than any declaration phrased in words. She had kept her lips clean, and when the kiss had lighted upon them, it had fallen upon virgin soil, from out of which had bloomed a white flower of passion. Before she had looked upon him as a warm friend, but since that night he had appeared to her in another guise—the guise of a lover, who has come into his own. She had met him then, a girl, and had left him a woman, and she felt that what he had made out of her in the one rare moment of his kiss, belonged to him and her. It seemed so wholly theirs that she had not been able to bring herself to discuss it with her mother. She had won it fairly and she treasured it. The thought of giving him up to Helen Rexhill, of promising her never to see Wade again, was frightful, and to be considered only as a last recourse. There was no suffering that she could not bear for his sake.

Mrs. Purnell was as keenly alive as ever to the hope that the young rancher might some day incline toward her little girl, but she was alive, too, to the impression which the Rexhills had made upon her. Her life with Mr. Purnell had not brought her many luxuries, and perhaps she overvalued their importance. She thought Miss Rexhill a most imposing young woman, and believed in the impeccability of the well-to-do. Her heart was still warmed by the memory of the courtesy with which she had been treated by the Senator's daughter, not without the gratification of feeling that it had been a tribute to her own worth. She had scolded Dorothy afterward for her frank speech to Miss Rexhill at the hotel, and felt that further slurs upon her were uncalled for.

"I'm sure Miss Rexhill treated us like a lady," Mrs Purnell said tartly. "She acted much more like one than you did, if I do have to say it. She was as kind as could be. She's got a tender heart. I could see that when she up and gave me that blotter, just because I had said that it reminded me of your childhood."

"Oh, that old blotter!" Dorothy said petulantly. "What did it amount to? You talk as though it were something worth having." She was so seldom in a pet that her mother strove to make allowances for her."

"I'm not saying that it's of any value, Dorothy, except to me. But it was kind of her to think that I might want it."

"It wasn't kind of her. She just did it to get rid of us, because we bored her. Oh, mother, you're crazy about the Rexhills! You think they're perfect, but I tell you they're not—they're not! They've been behind everything here. They've—" Her voice broke under stress of tears as she got to her feet.

"Dorothy, if you have no self-respect, have some——"

"I won't have the blotter here." The strain was proving more than the girl's nerves could stand. "I won't hear about it any more. I'm going to—to tear it up!"

"Dorothy!"

For all the good that Mrs. Purnell's tone of command did, it might as well have fallen upon the wind. She hastily followed her daughter, who had rushed from the room, and overtook her just in time to prevent her from destroying the little picture. Her own strength would not have sufficed to deter Dorothy in her purpose but for her realization, in her heart, of the shameful way in which she was treating her mother, who was ill.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, miss? Look in the glass at your face! No wonder you don't think you look like that sweet child in the picture. You don't look like her now. That was why I wanted to keep it, to remind me of the way you used to look."

"I'm sorry."

Blushing deeply, Dorothy stole a glance at her reflection in the looking-glass of the bureau, before which she stood, and shyly contrasted her angry expression of countenance with the sweet one of the child on the back of the blotter. Suddenly she started, and leaning toward the mirror, stared at what she read there. The blood seemed driven from the surface of her skin; her lips were parted; her eyes dilated. She drew a swift breath of amazed exultation, and turned to her mother, who had viewed all this with surprise.

"I'll be back soon. I can't tell you what it is." Dorothy's voice rang with the song of victory. "But I've found out something wonderful!"

Before Mrs. Purnell could adjust herself to such veering moods, the girl was down the stairs and running toward the barn. Slipping the halter of her pony, she swung to its back without thought of a saddle, and drove the willing little creature into the road. "Dorothy!" She waved her hand to her mother, at the window, without slackening speed, and vanished like a specter into the night.

"Oh, hurry, Gypsy, hurry!" she breathed into the pony's twitching ear.

Her way was not far, for she was going first to the hotel, but that other way, into the mountains after Gordon, might be a long journey, and no time could be wasted now. She was going to see Helen Rexhill, not as a suppliant bearing the olive branch, but as a champion to wage war in behalf of the missing ranchman. She no longer thought of giving him up, and the knowledge that she might now keep the love which she had won for her very own, made her reel on the pony's back from pure joy. She was his, as he was hers, but the Rexhills were his enemies; she knew that now, and she meant to defeat them at their own wretched game. If they would tell her where Gordon was, they might go free for all she cared; if they would not, she would give them over to the vengeance of Moondance, and she would not care what became of them. Meanwhile, she thanked her lucky star that Trowbridge had promised to keep a courier at the big pine.

She tethered her pony at the hitching-post before the hotel and entered the office. Like all the men in the town, Frank, the proprietor, was her devoted admirer, but he had never seen her before in such physical radiance. He took his cigar from between his lips, and doffed his Stetson hat, which he wore indoors and out, with elaborate grace.

"Yes, ma'am, Miss Rexhill's in, up in the parlor, I think. Would you like me to step up and let her know you're here?"

"No, thank you, Frank." Her smile was doubly charming because of its suggestion of triumph. "I'll go on up by myself."

Miss Rexhill, quite heedless of the charge she was about to face, was embroidering by the flickering light of one of the big oil lamps, with her back to the doorway, and so was not immediately aware of Dorothy's presence in the room. Her face flushed with indignation and she arose when she recognized her visitor.

"You will please pardon me, but I do not care to receive you."

This beginning, natural enough from Helen's standpoint, after what her father had told her only a few hours before in Moran's office, convinced Dorothy

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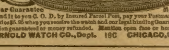

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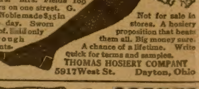

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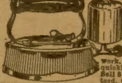

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that she had read the face of the blotter correctly. She held her ground aggressively, between Miss Rexhill and the door.

"You must hear what I have to say to you. I have not come to visit you."

"Isn't it enough for me to tell you that I do not wish to talk to you?" Helen lifted her brows and shrugged her shoulders. "Surely, it should be enough. Will you please stand aside so that I may go to my room?"

"No, I won't! You can't go until you've heard what I've got to say." Stung by the other woman's contemptuous tone, and feeling at a social disadvantage, Dorothy forced an aggression into her own voice, ugly to the ear.

"Very well!" Miss Rexhill shrugged her shoulders again in a truly Gallic way and resumed her seat. "We will not engage in a vulgar row. Since I must listen to you, I must, but at least I need not talk to you, and I won't."

"You know that Gordon Wade has disappeared?" Helen made no response, and Dorothy bit her lip in anger. "I know that you know it. I know that you know where he is. Perhaps you do not know that his life is in danger. If you will tell me where he is I can save him. Will you tell me?" The low, throaty note note of grief in her voice brought a stiletto-like flash from the other woman, but no response.

"Miss Rexhill, your family and Mr. Wade were friends once. Probably you don't realize what the situation is here in this town, where everybody loves him, and what would happen to you, if I told what I know about you. I don't believe he would want it to happen, even after what you've done to him. If you will tell me——"

Helen turned in her chair, her face white with passionate anger.

"I said that I would not talk to you, but your impertinence is so—so insufferable—so absolutely insufferable, that I will speak. You will tell people what you know about me. What do you know about me?" She arose with blazing eyes to face Dorothy.

"I know that you know where Gordon is."

"You know nothing of the kind. I do not know where Mr. Wade is, but why should I tell you if I did? Suppose I were to tell what I know about you? I don't believe the whole of it is known in Moondance yet. You—you must be insane."

"About me?" Dorothy's surprise was genuine. "There is nothing you could tell any one about me."

Miss Rexhill laughed her to scorn, a low, withering laugh that brought a flush of shame to the girl's cheeks, even though her conscience told her that she had nothing to be ashamed of. Dorothy stared at her with wide-open, puzzled eyes, driven for the moment from her own purpose.

"At least, you need not expect me to help you," Helen said acidulously. "I have my own feelings. I respected Mr. Wade at one time and valued his friendship. You have taken from me my respect for him, and you have taken from him his self-respect. Quite likely you had no respect for yourself, and so you had nothing to lose. But if you'll stop to think, possibly you'll see how impertinent you are to appeal to me.

"What are you talking about?" Dorothy's eyes, too, were blazing, but more in championship of Wade than of herself. She still did not fully understand the charge that Miss Rexhill had brought. She thought only of the reflection upon Gordon.

"Really, you are amusing." Helen looked at her through half-closed lids. "You are quite freakish. I suppose you are a moral degenerate, or something of the sort." She waited upon the insult, but the little Purnell girl was fairly dazed and bewildered. "Do you want me to call things by their names?"

"Yes," said Dorothy, "I do. Tell me what you are talking about."

"I don't mind, I'm sure. Names have never been horrible things to me. It's the deed that's horrible, not the name. You were found in Mr. Moran's office with Mr. Wade, at night, misbehaving yourself. Do you dare come now to me——"

"That is not true!" The words poured from the girl's lips with an intensity that would have carried conviction to any woman less infuriated than the Senator's daughter was. "Oh!" Dorothy caught her hands to her throat and struggled for a moment to speak. "I didn't know you meant that. It isn't true!"

In the grip of their emotions, neither of the girls had noticed the entrance of Rexhill. Helen saw him first and dramatically pointed to him.

"There is my father. Ask him!"

"I do not have to ask him what I've done." Dorothy felt that she must suffocate. "No one could believe that of Gordon, whatever they thought of me."

"Ask me? Ask me what?" the Senator nervously demanded. He had in his pocket a telegram just received from the authorities at Washington, stating that the cavalry would be sent from Fort Hadley only upon the request of the Governor of Wyoming. The Governor was not likely to make such a request, and Rexhill was more harried than he had been in the whole of his lifetime. He could only hope that Tug Bailey would escape capture. "Who is this?" He put on his glasses and looked Dorothy over. "Oh, it's the woman who was caught in our office."

"She has come to me to plead for Gordon Wade—to demand that I tell her where he is now. I do not know; none of us know; but I wouldn't tell her if I did." Helen spoke triumphantly.

"You had better go," Rexhill said brusquely to Dorothy. "You are not wanted here. Go home!"

While they had talked, Dorothy looked from one of them to the other with the quiet contempt which the good woman is privileged to feel when she is impugned. Now she came over to the Senator and confronted him.

"Did you tell your daughter I was caught in your office with Gordon Wade?" Before her steady gaze, Rexhill winced.

"You don't deny it, do you?" he blustered.

"I don't deny being there with him, and I won't deny anything else to such a man as you. I'm too proud to. Quite likely, for your sake, you would have done better not to have blackened me." She turned swiftly to his daughter. "Perhaps you don't know all that I thought you did. We were in Moran's office—Mr. Wade and I—because we felt sure that your father had some criminal purpose here in Moon Valley. We were right. We found papers locating gold on Mr. Wade's range, which was your father's motive in seeking to dispossess him."

Helen laughed scornfully.

"Do you expect me to believe that?"

"No, of course not," her father growled. "Come on to bed. Let her preach here until they put her out." He had moved to go when the vibrant command in Dorothy's voice stopped him.

"Wait. You had best hear me, for I hold you now absolutely at my mercy. I have caught you! You are trapped!" There was no doubting that she believed what she said, and the Senator's affairs were in a sufficiently precarious state to bid him pause.

"Nonsense!" He made his own tone as brave as he could, but there was a look of haunting dread in his eyes.

"Senator Rexhill—" the girl's voice was pitched low, but its quality thrilled her hearers—"when my mother and I visited your daughter here, she gave my mother a blotter. There was a picture on it that reminded my mother of me as a child; that was why she wanted it. It has stood since then on my mother's bureau. I never noticed anything curious about it until today." She looked, with a quiet smile at Helen. "Probably you forgot that you had just blotted a letter with it!"

Helen started and went pale, but not so pale as her father, who grew so chalk-white that the wrinkles in his chin looked like make-up against its pallor.

"I was holding the blotter before the looking-glass this evening," Dorothy went on, in the same low tone, "and I saw that the wet ink had transferred to the blotter a part of what your daughter had written. I read it. It was this: 'Father knew Santry had not killed Jensen.'"

The Senator moistened his lips with his tongue and strove for a chuckle, but the effort failed lamentably. Helen, however, appeared much relieved.

"I remember now, and I am well repaid for my moment of sentiment. I was writing to my mother and was telling her of a scene that had transpired between Mr. Wade and my father. I did not write what you read; rather, it was not all that I wrote. I said: 'Gordon thought that father knew Santry had not killen Jensen.'"

"Have you posted the letter?" her father asked, repressing as well as he could his show of eagerness.

"No. I thought better about sending it. I have it upstairs."

"If you hadn't it, of course, you could write it again, in any shape you chose," said Dorothy, crisply.

"There is nothing in that," Rexhill declared, when he had quietly drawn a breath of intense relief. "Your championship of Wade is running away with you. What other—er—grave charges have you to bring against me?"

"I have one that is much graver," she said so promptly that he could not conceal a fresh start of uneasiness. "This morning Mr. Trowbridge and I were out for a ride. We rode over to the spot where Jensen was shot, and Mr. Trowbridge found there a cartridge which fits only one gun in Moondance. That gun belongs to a man named Tug Bailey."

By now Rexhill was thoroughly aroused, for although he was too good a jurist not to see the holes in so incomplete a fabric of evidence against him, he was impressed with the influence such a story would exert upon inflamed public spirit. If possible, this girl's tongue must be stopped.

"Pooh!" He assumed a fine show of intolerance. "Why bring such tales to me. You'd make a very poor lawyer, young woman, if you think that such rumors will serve to impeach my good conduct before any court."

"There is a warrant out for Bailey," Dorothy went on quietly. "If he is caught, and I choose to make public what I know, I am sure you will never reach a court. You have underestimated the men you have found here. I would not have to prove what I have told you. I need only to tell it to them, and—I don't know what they'd do to you. It makes me feel a bit sick to think about it."

The thought made the Senator sick, too, for of late he had seen that things were going badly for him. He was prepared to temporize, but there was no need for him to contemplate surrender, or flight, so long as Bailey remained at large. If the man were captured and there was likelihood of a confession being wrung from him, then most decidedly discretion would prove the better part of valor.

"Oh, of course, I am prepared to admit that in such a community as this, you might make trouble, unjustly, for me and my daughter. I am anxious to avoid that, because my interests are valuable here, and I have my daughter to consider."

"Don't think of me," Helen said quickly. Above all fear for herself would be the shame of being beaten by Dorothy Purnell and of having her triumph go to the making of Wade's happiness. The thought of that appeared worse to her ming than any physical suffering. "Do what you believe to be best. We are not cowards."

"But I must think of you, my dear. I am responsible to your mother." He turned to Dorothy again. "How much do you want?"

"How much? Oh!" She flushed hotly beneath the insult, but she chose to ignore it. "There is only one price that will purchase my silence. Tell me where Mr. Wade is."

"Bless my soul, I don't know." The Senator affected a display of injured innocence, which sat oddly upon his harried countenance. "I am willing to do what I can to save trouble, but I can't do the impossible."

For the moment, in a wretched sense of illness, Dorothy felt her conviction wavering. Could it really be possible that he was speaking the truth; that he did not know? But with the dreadful thought came also the realization that she must not let him fathom her mind. She told herself that she must keep her countenance, and she did so.

"There is not a man in Moondance who does not believe that Moran is responsible for Mr. Wade's disappearance. That is another thing that you should consider, for it is one more link in the chain of evidence—impressions—that I hold against you."

Rexhill was considering it, and swiftly, in the light of the visit he had had from Trowbridge. The cattle man had left him with a distinct feeling that every word spoken had been meant. "If we can prove it against you, we'll ride you to hell on a rail!" The language was highly figurative, but very suggestive, when the Senator recalled it to mind. He regretted that he had supported Moran in his lust of revenge. The lawless spirit of the West seemed to have gotten into his blood, but somehow there had been left out of it the love of personal violence.

"Even so," he said pompously. "Even if what you say of Moran should prove true, it does not follow that I knew it, or countenanced it. Mr. Moran is his own master."

"He is your employe—your agent—and you are responsible for what he does in your behalf," said Dorothy, desperately. "Why do you bandy words with me like this? You may be able to do it with me, but don't think you can do it with Mr. Trowbridge and the others, if I tell them what I know. I tell you, you can't. You feel safe before just me, but you are in greater danger than you think. You don't seem to realize—to realize—that maybe it is your life I am holding in my hand."

Helen's face blanched at that.

"I do realize it." There was a slight quaver in the Senator's voice, although he tried to speak with easy grace. "I assure you, I do, and I shall be very grateful to you—" his anxiety was crowding out his discretion—"if you will assist me to spare my daughter——"

"I say what I said before," Helen interposed, courageous to the last. There is,

(Continued on page sixteen.)

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In the Hidden City

Or, The Finger of Fate

By C. Mackie

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CHAPTER VI.

THE voice of Alexander Smith, speaking to the one on the throne, broke the heavy silence of the place.

"Great One," he said clearly, "I have come from a far country to bring you a message and a token.

"In my own land of America is a city which houses many of your people. It was my good fortune to protect one of them in a time of great danger. He was grateful, and he sent me here to China, where once I had visited and made friends. He directed me to the place of his most beloved brother, and gave me a token whereby I might prove my identity." He thrust his hand in his bosom and drew out a tablet of ivory covered with Chinese characters. Still kneeling, he gave it to the Chinaman on the throne.

The personage took it in his thin, long-nailed fingers, and examined it through his horn-rimmed spectacles. Alexander Smith turned and beckoned the girl to his side. She went timidly, with an appealing backward glance at Roy Fenton.

"This," said the Chinese, mildly, "is from my esteemed brother who is head of the clan in San Francisco. It begs me to offer you every courtesy of our society, and it orders me to present you with a guarantee that you will be protected by our society for the remainder of your days. Very good!"

"That is as I understood it," remarked Alexander Smith, but there was a note of uneasiness in his voice.

"And my esteemed brother also desires that I present you with the great ruby called 'the Flaming Heart.' That also is reward for the great service you rendered him."

"Yes," assented Smith, avariciously.

"And he also sends me in your care a beautiful maiden to be my wife—Pearl of the Casket he names her. Is that the maiden yonder?"

"That is the maiden," said Smith, darting an angry glance at the half-swooning girl.

"She appears not too happy to greet her bridegroom," sneered the man. "But never mind that now. Who is the third member of your party?"

"That is merely the guardian of the gate who led her thither. I should have dismissed him, but he was useful."

"He should have been dismissed," agreed the other. He glanced down at the tablets in his hand, shifted the leaves now and then, and occasionally lifted his little almond eyes to dart a glance at the American who had come across seas to ask for a reward for saving the life of his brother.

And the American had brought a fair foreign devil as bride to the Great One! If the Great One laughed in his capacious sleeve, no one observed him; his round, fat face was impassive, but those little coal-black eyes were disconcertingly active. They were on the tablet, they were searching Smith's pale face, they were regarding the girl's drooping form, and they rested longest on Roy Fenton's disguised form as he stood near the door.

Above all other sounds was the continuous roar of falling water from beyond the walls. Suddenly the voice of Great One rose above this sound.

"This is a secret place!" he declared, in a full, resonant voice. "All those who enter here must be members of this society—and for some it is not possible to attain membership. Among such people are foreign devils! Among such people are those who claim to have done service for which they expect reward! Among those are they who come unwillingly, as does this shrinking maiden! Among those are spies, like the man at the door! Among those are ones who steal—as does this man of whom my brother has written on these tablets many more things than he suspects. Behold—the leaves of the tablet are double, and there is secret writing between!

"Alexander Smith, slayer of my brother, death is yours! Lovely maiden, whom I desire not, and spy, whom I know not, you can never return by the way you entered. Death is for you, too, and I choose that it shall be by way of the Green Wall!"

He uttered a sharp command, and the silken hangings fluttered as a hundred armed Chinese rushed from concealment and ranged themselves around the throne. Alexander Smith was surrounded and led protesting to a corner. Roy dashed to Alice's side and flung his arm around her. Side by side they faced the implacable man on the throne.

"The Green Wall!" he ordered sharply.

A dozen men leaped to do his bidding. Heavy doors opposite the throne rolled open and the sound of water was deafening. From somewhere above the door there rushed a great fall of water, showing pale green, like a solid wall. It fell on jagged rocks outside the door, the bed of some underground river.

Dampness came from the waterfall, and a nauseating sickness possessed Roy for one moment. Then he thought of the helpless girl and the wicked old man who had dragged them here, and he pulled himself together.

"The wall of water for all of them," ordered the Great One, placidly.

Alexander Smith was brought forward and his hand placed in that of the girl. Roy was placed on her other side until the three Americans stood hand in hand, facing the cascade. Roy knew that it would be useless for him to attack the horde of men. What life he had must be devoted to the girl and an attempt to save her.

The soldiers took their places behind the three Americans and pressed them forward toward the open door. Then, at the prick of swords, the three, at a word from Roy, dashed forward and plunged into the wall of water.

CHAPTER VII.

WHEN Roy Fenton plunged into that wall of green water, hand in hand with Alice Smith and the man who had led them into this perilous adventure, he believed that the finger of fate, which had turned him aside from his homeward journey and had pointed out to him that Alice needed a protector, was at last indicating that he had reached the end of his earthly adventure, and was about to undertake that mysterious journey from whence no man returns to relate his happenings.

The wall of green poured an avalanche of water upon them, and its weight sent them down, down, until their feet touched the jagged rocks. They tumbled about, choking, gasping, half-strangled, with the turmoil.

Roy could swim, and he tried to support the girl who had happily lost consciousness. Alexander Smith had been torn loose from her frail hold, and had been sent tossing down the stream to certain death in the Black Pool, a few hundred yards distant. Undoubtedly the Great One had expected Roy and Alice to meet the same fate. But Roy was a fearless swimmer, and if the older man's strength had held out Roy might have saved all three of them. As it was he had a fearful struggle to keep the girl from drowning.

The swift undercurrent had swept them downstream, and Roy could feel that they were being irresistibly drawn toward some whirlpool or basin in which the river found an outlet. They struck a smoothly rounded rock with stunning force, and Roy gave Alice and himself up for lost.

But there came a countercurrent which swirled them inward toward the walls of the canyon. Then, gently, as if borne in tender arms, they were swept into a wide-mouthed opening in the wall, and tossed more dead than alive upon a wet stone floor.

Roy opened his eyes with a groan of pain. It was several moments before he recollected the events of the past few hours, and then he groped and found the drenched and limp form of the girl whom he had so pluckily carried through the wall of green water.

"Only to lose her at last!" he murmured fiercely. "It cannot be—after all! Why, I love her! Do you hear me, Alice? I love you, dearest!"

So he called her back to life, while he chafed her cold wrists and temples, and at last the sound of her faint voice made him rejoice.

"We are saved! Miraculously saved!" he told her, when she was able to sit up and comprehend his words. "This appears to be a cavern in the opposite wall to the Place of Waterfalls, and it is possible it may lead to a way of escape."

"And Mr. Smith?" she faltered.

Roy told her as gently as he could that he believed Alexander Smith had gone to the death planned by the Great One, who must have read from those mysterious tablets grave evidence against the American who had brought it to him as a token from a brother whom he had served, and who not only desired great honors, but some precious jewel, to be bestowed upon Smith by the Great One of the Hidden City in China.

And the Great One, reading the secret message written on the double pages of the ivory tablet, had learned that his brother in America had been slain by Alexander Smith, and it was desired that the Great One wreak vengeance upon him.

These things Alice and Roy pieced together from what they had heard in the audience chamber, and then Alice briefly related what she knew about Alexander Smith. He had been her father's lawyer and was executor of her fathers estate. As her guardian he was to conduct her personally to China, where her aunt and uncle, her nearest living relatives, were missionaries in Hankow, a city many hundred miles up the Yangtse-Kiang River.

The voyage to China was uneventful enough, and it was not until Alice overheard her guardian's evil schemes discussed with a Chinaman, who had also crossed on the same steamer, that she became suspicious and frightened.

Her appeal to Roy in the hotel restaurant was the result of her conviction that Alexander Smith had no intention of taking her to her relatives. Of the real motives he had in view, she could not guess, but the interview with the Great One revealed the ghastly plot of the American lawyer. He intended to barter the beautiful daughter of his friend—the man who had trusted him—in return for favors from the mighty head of the secret society of the Hidden City. It was well, indeed, that the Black Pool had received the black heart of such a dastard! But Alice King felt only pity for Alexander Smith.

"We must get out of this place," said Roy, at last. "If you feel able to come with me, we will penetrate the cavern to its farthest extremity. Escape may be at the other end."

"I am ready," said Alice, bravely, and so supporting her with his strong arm, Roy Fenton cautiously led the way toward the back of the cavern.

They approached into dead blackness that was not lightened by even a casual ray. Roy's hand groped along a rough stone passage, and was relieved to find that it gradually sloped upward, and that the farther they went, the fainter grew the sound of the waterfall through which they plunged.

"Courage!" he said. "I believe we are coming to an inner chamber. The air feels drier, and it is not quite so dark."

It was as he had predicted. Presently they emerged into a circular chamber hewn out of solid rock. Here the darkness gave way to an unearthly twilight, which enabled them dimly to distinguish their surroundings. The stone floor was bare, save for many scattered joss sticks.

In seven inches ranged about the walls were as many hideous images carved from stone and wood. One of the images, a magnificent statue of the Buddha, was adorned with many precious jewels and dangling from a necklace of jade was an enormous heart-shaped ruby.

"The Flaming Heart!" gasped the two fugitives in one voice.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE Flaming Heart—the magnificent ruby which Alexander Smith had heard of and had greedily tried to obtain from the Great One of the Hidden City!

"Why, the Great One probably didn't know where to lay his hand on it!" exclaimed Roy, at last. "I recollect hearing several years ago that a certain temple on the outskirts of Shanghai had been lost. Somehow the entrance to it had been choked up—perhaps by an earthquake shock—and access could not be gained to it and its treasures.

"To tell the truth, the Chinese appeared to grieve more over the loss of certain priceless gems which adorned the idols, and I heard much talk about a great ruby called 'the Flaming Heart.' It shall be yours, Miss Corwin, by right of discovery. The other things may remain here until they are found by others than ourselves."

As he spoke he mounted the dais, stepped up to the niche where the great idol was enthroned, and removed the jade necklace with its great ruby heart.

"Here, Miss Corwin, hide this in your gown until we are safe among friends. It may repay you for some of your sufferings."

"And how are you to be repaid, Mr. Fenton?" she murmured, as she concealed the jewels.

Roy looked at her with tender eyes.

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He might have told her that there was a flaming heart in his breast, but he merely said:

"I have had my reward in serving you."

Her downcast eyes and charming blush set his heart to beating to a dangerous time. He was swinging himself down from the niche, when suddenly the great image moved, toppled, and fell crashing to the stone floor, carrying with it part of the wall and ceiling above it.

Roy had instantly leaped to Alice Corwin's side, and instinctively she hid her face in his breast. When the clouds of dust had subsided and still trembling from the shock, they looked around them, they saw a great jagged hole in the ceiling.

The recumbent form of the fallen idol bulked large in the cavern, and Roy calculated that by standing upon it he might lift Alice to safety on the floor above and afterward pull himself after her.

"The way of escape is open," he suggested.

"You mean through that hole?" she asked, dismayed.

He nodded. "Will you trust yourself to me?"

"Certainly," she said, with such entire confidence that he could have hugged her on the spot.

"Come," he said, holding out his hand.

With her soft little hand in his own, he mounted the prostrate idol, and when, at last, they stood side by side on the uncertain surface of the huge shoulder, he could have lifted her slight form so that she could climb over the edge of the floor above. But she shrank from the attempt.

"You go first and then reach down after me," she pleaded. "I am afraid of what may be up there! I am afraid of the unknown! We know that no one save ourselves can enter this cavern!"

So Roy, glad to do her bidding, whatever it might be, left her standing on the shoulder of the fallen idol, and laying his hands on the ragged edge of the stones above, drew himself up into a stone-paved cellar. Without investigating his surroundings, he threw himself down with his head and shoulders overhanging the cavern below.

Alice Corwin stood on the shoulder of the fallen idol, her sweet face upturned to his, her violet eyes shining mystically in the dim light. She stretched up her hands to meet Roy's, when there came the sound of shrill cries from the river end of the cavern.

"Hi, yah!" came the staccato yelp of excited Chinese.

"We have been followed! Our escape from death has been discovered! Come!" Roy's hands strained down to meet hers.

They clasped, and slowly, steadily, he drew her up to the opening and lifted her beside him.

At the very moment she reached safety there burst into view in the temple below a number of Chinese—perhaps a score. Their cries ceased when they saw that the place was empty. Then they glimpsed the fallen idol, looked up at the hole in the ceiling, and recognizing the hated foreigners who had escape death in the Black Pool, swarmed up the side of the idol and prepared to pursue the two Americans.

Roy pulled his revolver, but found that the water had rendered it useless. So he jumped to his feet, grasped Alice's trembling hand, and ran once more through a strange, dark place, seeking to escape from the death that pressed close upon their heels.

"Hi, yah!" came the shrill, triumphant cry from the rear, as the first of their pursuers gained the hole in the ceiling.

"Wait a moment here. Never fear! I will return for you," whispered Roy, and thrusting Alice into an embrasure of the wall, he turned back and made for the hole where he could see two forms silhouetted against the dim light, striving to pull their comrades up from below.

It was an easy matter to creep upon the two and tumble them down among their companions. There was a din of shrieks and curses and yells of pain.

Again two Chinese attempted to scale the fallen idol and reach the hole; Roy permitted them to emerge from the opening, and then he as promptly darted from the gloom and sent them down among their companions. In this way each pair that he sent crashing down were not only themselves disabled, but they fell upon and wounded others.

Silence reigned while the remainder of the party held a confab; so Roy took advantage of the delay and stole away to rejoin Alice, who was waiting for him. He was deeply moved when she slipped her little hand in his, with that adorable air of confidence in him, and he resolved that he would restore her safely to her people if he lost his own life in the attempt.

But it is recorded that he hoped such a sacrifice would not be necessary, and that the kindly finger of fate, which had ordained that he should meet her and render her service, would also decree that she should love him in return, and that their days should be long and peaceful together in the homeland.

CHAPTER IX.

SO THE two, the young man and the maiden he had saved, rushed blindly through the winding passages, not knowing where they were, and only hoping and praying that the end of their journey would not bring them into the precincts of the Hidden City, where death lurked for all who were not members of the secret society.

"Shall we be saved, after all?" Alice asked once, as she leaned against Roy's shoulder for breath.

"Of course we shall," he said, with more confidence than he actually felt. "If we keep on at the pace we have been going, we will eventually reach some exit—ah, there is light ahead! What did I tell you?"

They came suddenly into a small open courtyard. On the farther side of the court was a gate, and within that gate was a wonderful garden of exotic plants.

"How do they grow without sunshine?" whispered Alice.

Roy shook his head. "Artificial heat and light, I suppose. I wonder if these are not the gardens of the Great One? They are! See, Alice!"

Suddenly among the garden paths appeared several beautiful Chinese ladies, richly dressed and chattering carelessly, as if life did not hold its measure of tragedy for them. Without warning there appeared in their midst the majestic form of the Chinese they had seen in the Palace of the Waterfall—the Great One himself!

"Let us hurry!" whispered Alice, and so they took the first passage in the opposite direction from the gardens of the chief of the secret order, and found themselves in a narrow alley which gradually mounted upward. The floor was of slabs of marble fitted together, and it was easy to mount.

Suddenly they came upon a guard, leaning sleepily against the wall. Before he could do more than open his mouth wide at the sight of a richly dressed Chinese maiden fleeing with a blue-bloused coolie, Roy's right arm had flung out, and the guard was a silent heap on the pavement.

"It's dreadful!" whispered Alice.

"It's their lives or ours—and I'll fight for ours till the last ditch!" panted Roy, as they whirled around a corner.

Bang! They came against a blank wall with the impression that somewhere in that smooth stone wall a door had slammed sharply.

"This must be another exit from the Hidden City," muttered Roy. "It may be the Great One's private way."

While they stood irresolute before the blank wall, it suddenly moved. A section of it moved toward them, and a man's head was protruded through the narrow opening. Roy almost shouted for joy. It was the head of Wah Lee, whom he had last seen in the Temple of Ten Thousand Prayers.

It was indeed the head of Wah Lee, but the head was tied up in many bandages, and it was evident that Wah Lee had been engaged in some desperate encounter.

"Wah Lee!" yelled Roy joyfully, and then the yellow face broadened in a happy grin.

"Ah, hah! So you come home by way of the Great One?" he chuckled. "I been watch for Missee and you. Come—far to go yet!"

He pulled them inside the wall; the secret door slid into place, and then he conducted them by more devious passages until they reached the foot of a winding stone stair. The stone stair led upward into the obscurity behind the great idol in the Temple of Ten Thousand Prayers.

As they left the temple and went blinking into the late sunshine of the native city of Shanghai, Wah Lee explained to them that just as he was about to follow them down the stair toward the Hidden City, he had been set upon by an enemy and had been grievously wounded.

As soon as he had salved his injuries, he had set forth to find his friends in the Hidden City. He had traversed the streets for many hours, and had just let himself out through the Great One's private way, when he had heard the approach of Alice and Roy, and had opened the door to peer out. He had recognized them at once.

It was dark when they reached the home of Roy's friends, the Dormans, and that delightful pair welcomed them royally and insisted upon Alice remaining at their bungalow until she could communicate with her relatives in Hankow. Alice accepted their invitation gratefully, and Roy was delighted.

* * * * * * *

In southern California there is a charming white house set in the midst of myriads of flowers. Here the Fentons live—and much of their wealth has been derived from the sale of the Flaming Heart, which Alice said was far too splendid a jewel for her to wear.

Wah Lee, the faithful one, is not the keeper of a fish stall—instead he is Roy's butler, and if he ever wonders what happened to his master and mistress that eventful night when the finger of fate pointed them to the Hidden City, he never questions, and they never have told him.

They are thankful that the dread events of that night ended in perfect happiness.

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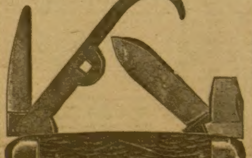

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This splendid brass lined, "Shur Edge" farmer's pocket knife is to be given away free. It is made of the best steel and has stag handle.

This knife is secured especially for our readers. It has a heavy Crucible Steel Blade, a heavy case-hardened Screwdriver, a Hoof Cleaner with a "Prestolite" Key for your automobile gas tank, and a Leather Reamer for making neat, round holes in leather.

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Pa Knew From Experience.

"Is the man your sister is goin' to marry rich?"

"Naw; every time the marriage is mentioned pa says, 'Poor man!'"

WILLING TO YIELD.

The man who says he likes to work
  Is courteous through and through,
When toil looms up he'll bow and smirk
  And murmur, "After you."

HIS AWFUL MISTAKE

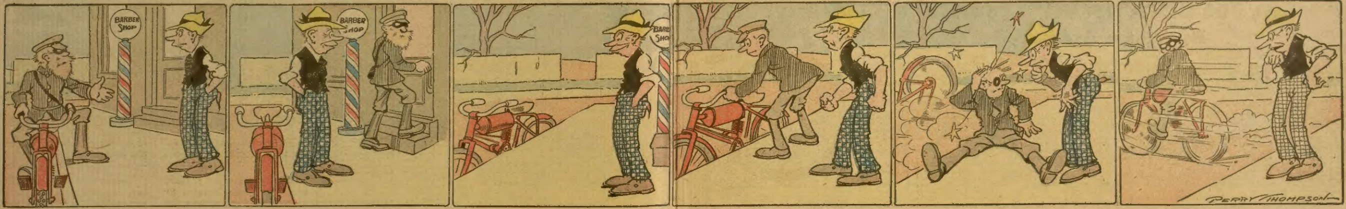
Premature Joy.

He popped; the maiden answered, "Yes"—
  With joy he thought he'd smother;
But she'd not finished: "Yesterday
  I said 'Yes' to another."

Outclassed.

Little Wife—"Did you tell Mr Blinks that baby had cut his first tooth?"

Big Hubby—"It's useless; he has a hen which laid fourteen eggs in six days."



Motorcyclist—"Say, friend, I'll give you fifty cents to watch my wheel while I go into this barber shop."

Hairbrain Hank—"You're on, stranger. Nobody will git that machine while I'm watchin' it—

"Gee, dis is erbout de softest four bits I've made for a month of Sundays! I'll sure have some fun—

"Thunderation! There's a feller tryin' to swipe it now! I'll paralyze him with a thump on the coco!" (Bing! Bang! Whump!)

Motorcyclist (minus whiskers)—"You gol-darned rummy, that wheel is mine! If you wasn't such a rotten fat-head you'd have known—

"I went in to get shaved, and as for that fifty cents you're lucky I don't have you pinched, you slab-sided, long-nosed pelican!"

A Liar Cornered.

The good clergyman was ministering to the needs of the inmates of a private lunatic asylum and he was especially warned against an exceedingly cross-grained, recently arrived patient. Nothing daunted, however, the reverend gentleman entered the little room where the man was confined and began conversation with him.

"Is it true," inquired the crazy man, "that Queen Elizabeth has recently married the Sultan of Turkey?"

"Quite true," replied the visitor, bent on humoring the patient.

"And it is also true, I suppose," went on the demented one, "that Theodore Roosevelt has been elected President of the United States for the thirty-second time?"

"Quite, quite true," said the clergyman fervently.

"Ah," said the madman, rubbing his hands with glee, "and pray what may you be?"

"I? Oh, I am a minister of the Gospel."

"Well," said the man reflectively, "you look like a minister of the church, and you may be one, but you are about the biggest blankety-blanked liar I ever met."

Necessity and Custom.

A group of Boston physicians gathered together for Harvard commencement week festivities were swapping stories.

"An unfortunate man," said one, "was seized suddenly on the street with cramps. He was hurried, despite his protests, to a hospital. The physicians there looked him over, poked him and said:

"'We may as well remove your appendix.'

"'Is it necessary?' asked the trembling victim.

"'It is not necessary,' said one physician, 'but it is customary.'"

A Family Favorite.

Friend—"You still employ Dr. Hardhead, I see."

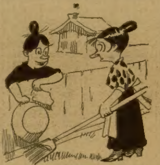
Mrs. de Style—"He's just lovely! My husband and I both like him. When we are ailing, he always recommends old port for my husband, and Newport for me."

No Use.

"It—er—seems," said he, regarding the unfortunate with scientific interest, "that the attacks of fever and chills appear on alternate days. Do you think—is it your opinion—that they have, so to speak, decreased in violence, if I may use that word?"

The patient smiled feebly.

"Doc," said he, "on fever days my head's so hot I can't think, and on ague days I shake so I can't hold an opinion."



Mrs. Whiffletree—"Deacon Brown's boy was arrested for shooting craps!"

Mrs. Homespun—"That's what comes o' giving a boy a gun! I s'pose the game warden ketched him with the craps on him?"

She Was Away.

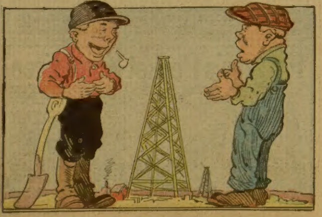
A little girl about 6 years old was visiting friends, and during the course of the conversation one of them remarked:

"I hear you have a new little sister."

"Yes," answered the little girl, "just 2 weeks' old."

"Did you want it to be a little girl?" asked the friend.

"No; I wanted it to be a boy," she replied, "but it came while I was at school."



Hicks—"Too bad they put you on the night shift permanently."

Wicks—"Oh, I don't know. By workin' nights I'll save my room rent and by sleepin' days I'll save my board."

A Note of Thanks.

Timkins was one of those people who live in constant dread of burglars, and one day, so as to be prepared for all emergencies, he purchased a revolver—a nice but comparatively harmless little weapon, "For burglars," neatly engraved upon the butt.

Timkins took great pride in his new toy, but one evening he forgot to take it upstairs with him when he went to bed. And, of course, it was during that night that a burglar did at last elect to enter his house.

When Timkin came down next morning he found to his dismay that nearly all his valuables had gone. The treasured revolver, however, had been spared. It lay on his study table and beside it was a note:

"Thanks, but I always carry my own! The Burglar."

Meant No Harm.

In a certain suburban home is a large green parrot with a reputation for loquacity; also a small-sized lad named Willie. One day mother heard a commotion that sounded like the parrot, and, on cautiously investigating, found Willie standing beside the cage.

"Willie," exclaimed mother, as she entered the room, "what are you doing?"

"Nothin'," was the ready rejoinder of Willie. "Jes' lookin' at the parrot."

"Don't tell me a story, Willie!" said mother severely. "You were trying to teach that bird to swear!"

"No, I wasn't, mamma," stoutly averred the youngster. "I was only tellin' him what he mustn't say."

Humbling.

An old Scotchwoman, who had resisted all entreaties of her friends to have her photograph taken, was at last induced to employ the services of a local artist, in order to send her likeness to a son in America. On receiving the first impression she failed to recognize the figure thereon depicted as herself, so, card in hand, she set out for the artist's studio to ask if there was no mistake.

"Is that me?" she queried.

"Yes, madam," replied the artist.

"And is it like me?" she again asked.

"Yes, madam; it's a speaking likeness."

"Aweel!" she said resignedly, "it's a humblin' sicht."

A Mistake in Color.

A man went into a Southern restaurant not long ago and asked for a piece of old-fashioned Washington pie. The waiter, not understanding and yet unwilling to concede his lack of knowledge, brought the customer a piece of chocolate cake.

"No, no, my friend," said the man. "I meant George Washington, not Booker Washington."

Another Brute.

Wife—"I'd like to know where these contemptible jokers get their ideas of mothers-in-law."

Husband—"H'm! I don't know. Perhaps they used to be divorce court reporters."

Tommy Shows His Knowledge.

Teacher—"Tommy, to what class of the animal kingdom do I belong?"

Tommy—"Dunno, teacher. Pa says you're an old hen, and ma says you're an old cat."

Heard on the Train.

"Do you catch cold easily?"

"Easily? Why, I catch cold if I trim my finger nails too close."

A Selfish Man.

An aged German and his wife were much given to quarreling. One day, after a particularly unpleasant scene, the old woman remarked, with a sigh: "Vell, I vish I vas in Heafen!"

"I vish I vas in a beer-garden!" shouted her husband.

"Ach ja," cried the old wife, "always you try to pick out the best for yourself!"

Just So.

"I'm new in the cigar business; so I'm trying to familiarize myself with the various brands."

"Learning the ropes, so to speak."

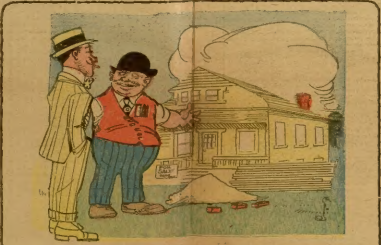
An Encouraging Sign.

Two retired tradesmen residing in the country were discussing matters generally, when one asked:

"How is your son doing in the city?"

"Oh, he doesn't say much about his business," was the reply, "but he writes me that he's got a lot of friends!"

"That's very encouraging," remarked the other, "for it shows that he hasn't had to borrow money yet!"



Neighbor—"That's a very neat residence you're building there."
Builder—"Neat is no name for it—even the nails are manicured."

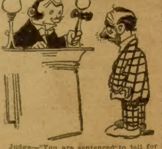
For Rent.

Henry was in the real estate business, but he had never made a sale or found anything to rent, and he was always hanging around the house.

Aunt Dinah did not believe in spoiling children. "Ah don't see why yo' don't go to work?" she said.

"Oh, I make my living with my head," said Henry.

"Well, Ah's glad you don' foun' som'-t'n' dat you can rent out," she said.



Judge—"You are sentenced to jail for a term commencing now and ending the first of July."

Defendant—"Can't you make it after the Fourth? I'm a nervous man."

Chosen.

"William!" called a young wife. "William, come here, quick."

Thinking that some danger assailed her, William grasped a stick and rushed up two flights of stairs to her assistance. He entered the room breathlessly and found her looking out at the window.

"See!" said she. "That's the kind of hat I want you to get me!"

No Cruelty.

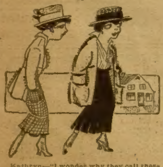
Traveler—"Yes, I was captured by the savages, and sentenced to marry a squaw."

Hostess—"Horrible!"

Traveler—"Yes; but they had some mercy. They did not insist on a fashionable wedding."

Johnnie's Mule.

Johnnie had a little mule, its hoofs were hard as rock. He used to hitch the donkey up and drive him 'round the block. One day the little mule he stopped and would not move a shoe, so Johnnie got his pocketknife and stuck him just a few. Now, when that donkey felt that knife, he moved himself, you bet; and Johnnie, well, he almost moved; they haven't found him yet.



Kathryn—"I wonder why they call these straws 'sailor hats.' Sailors never wear 'em."

Kittye—"Wait till the wind catches them and then watch them sail."

His Discovery.

The wife of the great botanist beamed at him across the supper table.

"But these," she exclaimed, pointing to the dish of mushrooms that had been set before her, "are not all for me, are they?"

"Yes, Mabel," he nodded. "I gathered them especially for you."

She beamed upon him gratefully. What a dear old husband he was! In five minutes she demolished the lot. At breakfast next morning he greeted her anxiously.

"Sleep all right?" he inquired.

"Splendidly," she smiled.

"Not sick at all—no pains?" he pressed.

"Why, of course not, Archie," she responded.

"Hurrah, then!" he exclaimed. "I have discovered another species of mushroom that isn't poisonous."

The Message.

The young man hesitated to believe the statement of her little brother that the young lady was not at home. He repeated the question, at the same time displaying a quarter. The boy eyed it longingly and again replied in the negative.

"But didn't she leave a message for me?" asked the disappointed swain.

"Yessir," said the lad—and nothing more.

As one who sees a great light, the young man tossed him the coin. "Now," he said, "out with the message."

"She said she's not gonna see you any more and you're not to give me any money."

Solving the Riddle.

The little agricultural village had been billed with "Lecture on Keats" for over a fortnight. The evening arrived at length, bringing the lecturer to discourse on the poet. The advertised chairman, taken ill at the last moment, was replaced by a local farmer. This worthy introduced the lecturer and terminated his remarks by saying:

"And now, my friends, we shall soon all know what I personally have often wondered—what are Keats?"

Not So Hopeless.

Shortly after the death of one of England's great poets one of his devoted admirers visited the little village where the poet had lived and died. The stranger entered into conversation with an old man, a native of the village, remarking sadly on the death of the poet.

"Aye, aye," answered the old man, encouragingly; "still I mak' no doobt but the wife'll carry the business on."

His New Machine.

"I saw young Suburbo running a new machine this morning."

"Was it one of the latest models?"

"I couldn't say."

"I thought you knew all about automobiles."

"So I do. But I don't know anything about lawn mowers."

Favored.

"Does your wife neglect her home in making speeches?"

"Not a bit of it," replied Mr. Meekton. "She always lets me hear the speeches first."

In the Parlor, Too.

New Boarder—"What is the landlady's daughter playing?"

Old Boarder—"A mixture of airs from a lot of old operas—a sort of a musical hash, you know."

Magazine Limitations.

Magazine Editor—"We need a leading article for next month."

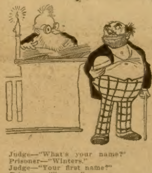
Regular Contributor—"I can prepare an elaborate historical sketch of Napoleon."

"Won't do. Too much like news."

"Might work on something like Solomon."

"Too modern."

"All right, I'll get up an illustrated article on Adam."



Judge—"What's your name?"
Prisoner—"Winters."
Judge—"Your first name?"
Prisoner—"Somers."
Judge—"Now don't spring any joke stuff: I won't fall for it."

A Poor Guess.

Son—"What does Congressman Popullem mean by saying that the money of the country is unevenly distributed?"

Father (a carpenter)—"Don't know 'xactly. Maybe he means that it isn't right for a blatherskite like him to be drawing thirteen dollars and fifty cents a day, while a carpenter like me is often thankful to make that much a week."

An Orphan.

Alice Joyce, star in motion pictures, had an experience with a little negro girl which brings a chuckle wherever it is repeated.

Miss Joyce was on her way home after an arduous day's work. A little colored girl crying against a telegraph pole aroused her sympathy. The charming star approached the girl and inquired the cause of the trouble. The child replied that her aunt had just driven her from the house.

"Where is your father?" asked Miss Joyce.

"Nevah had no pappy," was the reply.

"Well, where is your mother?"

"Daid," was the laconic answer.

Miss Joyce was touched. "Dead," she replied, pityingly.

"Yath! she done died befoh Ah was bo'n!"

In Honor of the Boarders.

"Ma, better lock up the bathroom, and get out the old wooden tubs."

"Why pa——"

"And hide the phonograph and those seven-dollar records."

"For goodness' sakes——"

"And while you're at it you'd better put away your fancy dishes and get out those old blue things you hate so."

"What's gettin' into you, pa?"

"We've got a few summer boarders coming here from the city, and we've got to give 'em the sort of country life they expect."

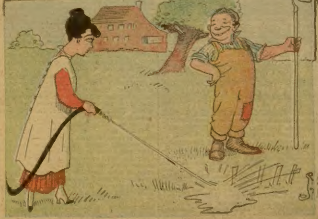
Cooling the Blood.

Father and son went for a stroll one sweltering day in summer. As they passed a vender of ice cream the boy turned to his father and said, lovingly:

"I vish you'd buy me some ice cream, fader. I do feel warm."

His father gazed at him for a few seconds in mild surprise and then exclaimed:

"No, no, Ikey, my poy; but I'll tell you vot I'll do. I'll tell you some ghost stories vot'll make your blood run cold."



Mr.—"He and she were debating whether they would call their summer place 'Sweet Dreams' or 'Pleasant Thought.'"
Mrs.—"Which won?"
Mr.—"After they lived there a week they both decided on 'Nightmare.'"

At Post o' Peril

Or, The Black Beaver Treasure

By Victor Ardmore

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CHAPTER VII.

BASIL had lost all recollection of outside matters in the absorbing interest that was awakened by the pale lady, but Sandy brought him back to wisdom and prudence quickly. He submitted to Sandy's dictation and walked by his side.

"Don't hurry," said the clerk softly, "and don't look back. Derosier will see us, but that may not cause trouble. Don't look back! Do you realize the risk you took in speaking to Madame?"

"Is Derosier jealous of his wife?" Basil asked.

"Jealous! That word does not express it. And, by the way, she is no wife of his, or I am much in error. She is so called by all here and possibly the poor woman herself thinks so, but there is a story back of it. She lives in the trader's house, but in another part. The fact is, she is a prisoner."

"A prisoner? And why?"

"That I don't know, but she has been at Post o' Peril two years, just as you see. I don't understand how you secured speech with her. I never have done that, nor others than Derosier and a few of his trusted female servants. One of them always watches over her, to see—at least, I suppose it's to see nobody speaks to her. Yet you have done it. How, Basil, how?" and Sandy's face was eager as he turned more fully upon his companion.

"It was very simple. She was sitting at the window, and called to me as I was passing. I stopped and listened."

"Her watcher must have been careless, but if so, it's for the first time, I think. Do you know, Basil, nobody here except the trader knows who that poor lady is?"

"They don't? Why, she is Angus Gregg's wife."

"Gregg's wife? Do you mean that? How did you know? Do you mean the Angus Gregg who was often here in Trader Campbell's day?"

"Yes."

"Did you know her in those days?"

"No, but she has just told me that he was her husband."

"She has? Astonishing! She is mentally afflicted, but she ought to know about that. Gregg's wife! I never knew he was married, but that proves nothing. Madame surely should know. Tell me all she said."

They had reached the door to Basil's quarters. Before entering Basil stole a backward glance. Only an Indian woman was to be seen.

"I hope Derosier has not become suspicious," he said slowly. "It was perhaps unfortunate that I stayed to talk, but Madame at once gained my attention, and I was held there. Angus Gregg, like Michel Ayot, disappeared when my father was lost, and as they were men of unquestioned loyalty, mention of his name wrapped me fast in Madame's speech. Angus may have the secret that Michel forgot when his memory left him."

Sandy shook his head doubtfully and said nothing as they entered. He was soon in possession of a full account of the late interview.

"It is too much for me," he said slowly, "but I am beginning to drift toward your theory. Why has Derosier held Madame prisoner here? Even if you call her his guest, she is not kept out of pity. The trader has no pity. Then why does he retain Gregg's wife?"

"Sandy," said Basil, impetuously, "I believe that Angus is alive."

"Then where is he?"

"Where is his wife?"

"Do you mean to suggest that Angus, too, is a prisoner?"

"I have no clear theory. Of course, if Angus really lives, he is not at Post o' Peril. There are many other forts of the Northwest Company, and there are vast tracts of forest where no man goes except at long intervals. It would be very easy to hold the Scotch voyageur prisoner there. Do you see where this argument leads us?"

"Where?"

"To the conclusion that there is something the Northwesters want to know. Angus and Michel disappeared when my father fell in the woods. You know what poor Michel is now, but why is he kept here when he can do no real work? Why is Gregg's wife here? Where is Gregg?"

They were interrupted as Donald returned. He had been looking about the post, and had made himself familiar with many things. By so doing he had equipped himself for action in the future, if it was necessary, but he had no important discovery to communicate. He listened carefully to what Basil had to tell, and then considered the new points gravely.

"It seems to me," he said slowly, "that our enemies have some knowledge of the Black Beaver."

"I fear that," Basil answered quickly.

"Probably they do not know more than that Trader Campbell had something of value that vanished when his fort fell before the Northwesters' assault. Plainly, they do not know it was buried here. Just what they think it is we cannot guess now."

"But," argued Sandy, "what can they expect from Michel Ayot?"

"Nothing, while he remains as he is now, but there is always the possibility that he will recover his mind. The same idea applies to Gregg's wife, though why she should have knowledge on the subject I do not see, and I doubt that she ever did have. She was not here when the post fell, as I understand it. If I am right she is held simply because she is his wife, and as a forlorn hope."

Further conversation did not bring new light, and presently Sandy went away to his duties. Donald had bluntly cautioned him not to be seen too much with them, nor to be openly friendly when they did meet. Suspicion would easily be started into life.

"How," asked Basil, "do these latest beliefs affect our errand here?"

Donald understood, but did not see fit to admit knowledge.

"What do you mean?"

"We came with but one object in mind—to secure the Black Beaver. Now, we find that, instead of being among foes who are wholly unsuspicious of the existence of the treasure, they are possessed of some information and are doing—we don't know what. This makes our position here very dangerous."

This was just what Donald was thinking, but he did not see fit to admit it then.

"Bear in mind," he urged, "that if they are really suspicious their theories go back two years. By this time they must have given up hope of success—yes, even thought of it."

"You forget that Michel and Angus Gregg's wife are still held here by them."

Talk did not advance their enlightenment, and they presently took heed to the fact that some listener might be near and dropped useless discussion.

The events that had followed so swiftly immediately after their arrival had nothing to keep them company in the next two days. They lived an uneventful life at the post, Basil keeping up his pretense of being in ill health, and nobody seemed further interested in them than to act a hospitable part.

Derosier was always amiable when with them, and neither by word nor look did he seem to regard them as other than harmless guests. He was nearly always busy, and often away from the fort. Madame Gregg they did not see again and Michel Ayot moved to and fro in his aimless way, doing trivial things for his own amusement, and smiling, talking, and singing as if light-hearted. All efforts to get light as to the exact point where the Black Beaver was buried had been unavailing.

To Donald the period was one of trial. Always a man of action, he secretly rebelled at being cooped up in the fort, waiting, and never making a forward step in their mission. This operated unpleasantly, and he learned for the first time that he had nerves.

The second night after he learned of the interview with Gregg's wife, he awoke at midnight and tossed for half an hour on his bed. Then he arose, went to the window, and sat down where he could look out.

Post o' Peril was largely asleep, but he could see the sentinel at the gate and others on the palisade platforms. The watch was being carefully kept. Nearer at hand the dogs were represented by occasional skulkers who prowled, after the habit of their kind. This was the only visible life at that hour.

Donald sat and considered. How were he and Basil to do their work? How was the Black Beaver to be unearthed when its position was so uncertain?

While he considered he became aware that there was a stir at the gate. He looked and saw the sentinel moving in a new way. There was short delay, and then other men appeared. Five in number, they passed the gate and were inside the post.

There was no pause. Advancing through the inclosure, they drew nearer to the watcher, and he saw enough, even in the poor light, to recognize Derosier as one of the number. Something else impressed him even more. One of the party was clearly a prisoner, and he walked between his companions with their hands upon him. Moreover, the way in which his arms were held at his side suggested that he was bound.

Ordinarily this could have meant little to Donald. There was war, thinly veiled in secrecy, between the rival fur

SPECIAL

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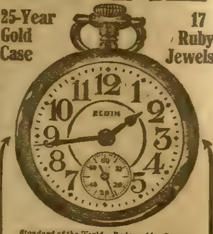

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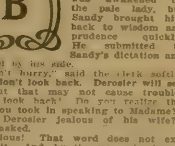

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They can be reduced and the pain relieved by applying ABSORBINE, JR. It has effected remarkable results for others and should do the same for you.

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THE ANTISEPTIC LINIMENT

is an antiseptic liniment that is healing, cooling and soothing—it stimulates the natural processes so that a freer circulation through the veins results. It is made of herbs and is non-poisonous.

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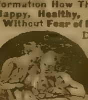
To Women Who Dread Motherhood

Information How They May Give Birth to Happy, Healthy, Children Absolutely Without Fear of Pain—SENT FREE.



Don't dread the pains of childbirth. Dr. J. H. Dye devoted his life to relieving the sorrows of women. He has proven that the pain at childbirth need no longer be feared. Send your name and address to Dr. J. H. Dye Medical Institute, 130 Lewis Block, Buffalo, N. Y., and we will send you, postpaid, his wonderful book which tells how to give birth to happy, healthy children, absolutely without fear of pain, also how to become a mother. Do not delay but write TO-DAY.

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combination of big catcher's mitt, fielder's glove, catcher's mask (extra strong and durable) and rubber center ball, big league style, or fine chest protector or complete suit, including shirt, pants, cap and belt, good quality, extra well sewed. Send name and we will send you 8 sets of our fine pictures to sell at 25 cents each. Send us the $2 you collect and for your trouble we will send you outfit as described. Write today for pictures. Get in the game at once.

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Positive relief! Tobacco Abstainer—new scientific treatment. Relief in 10 to 24 hours. Cigarette smoking, chewing, snuff-using or tobacco in any form. No desire after first dose. Not a substitute. Pleasant to take. No bad after-effects. Non-poisonous. No habit forming drugs. Relief guaranteed or money refunded. Honest, bonafide guarantee. Don't continue to be a tobacco slave when relief is within your reach. Write today for astonishing facts. Book postpaid free.

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TAPE-WORM Expelled alive in 60 minutes with head, or no fee. No fasting. 64 page Book for 2c stamp.
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Looks like a regular automatic. Gun metal finish—well made—will last a lifetime. Shoots accurately and to the mark. For indoor or outdoor target practice. More fun with this, boys, than anything else you ever owned. Send quick. Surprise the boys in your home town.

Free Offer to Boys Send us 25c to pay for a year's subscription to our magazine and the names of 5 boy friends and we will send you this 20-Shot Pistol FREE. Write name of boys on separate sheet. This offer made to introduce.

EVERY DAY LIFE, Dept. A. P. 51, CHICAGO

companies, and the least of its manifestations was the taking of prisoners.

Now, however, Donald was keenly interested and greatly curious. Quickly but quietly he dropped from the window and took to the shadow of the adjacent buildings, eager to get near enough to see more. Moving at right angles to the course of the other men, he soon found himself as near as was prudent. Halting, he pressed against the side of the trading-store and waited.

Led by Derosier, the men came nearer. The prisoner moved with the boldest step of any one there, yet with a suggestion of deep weariness. It was impossible to see his face, or to discover if he was known to the spy. They paused by the side of the blacksmith shop.

"In with him!" Derosier ordered.

The prisoner stirred with the muscles of a strong man and wrenched at his bonds.

"Will ye no give a body a chance at ye?" he demanded.

Donald started. The voice was plainly Scotch. Who was the man?

CHAPTER VIII

"IN WITH him!" Derosier repeated imperiously. "Make no noise!"

The order was obeyed, and the stranger was hustled through the door. All followed him, and the door was softly closed behind them. Donald, watching, found his view of them ended for then, but he was persistent enough to risk something further. A dim light showed in the blacksmith's quarters, and he pressed as close to the window as he dared.

With one exception the trader's companions were French voyageurs, but it was the exception that drew Donald's attention and held it. He was a heavily-built man of about thirty years, and roughly dressed. Above a red beard was a square, pugnacious face, and it was as plainly Scotch as his speech. Just then he was not like a man of peace, and he glared at his captors with absolute ferocity, but the spy looked farther, and mentally pronounced the face that of an honest man.

"Man," he said, addressing Derosier, "I will ask only one favor of you, and that is that ye leave me loose in this room with chance to fight the whole of ye. Let me be empty-handed, for I fear ye not——"

"Away with him!" the trader interrupted sharply.

The prisoner was dragged to the stairs that led to the upper floor.

"A pack of cowards ye be!" he cried bitterly. "Do ye fear one poor body that has no weapon? Be a man for once, and leave me have a chance——"

The men were clattering up the stairs and Donald heard no more. He stepped back and looked at the upper windows. A light appeared there, but he could not see more. For a moment he considered searching for a ladder, but the risk of using it was great, and there did not seem any excuse for such a hazard. Why should he, who had so much to do already, jeopardize everything for an unknown?

Still, the plight of the red-bearded man appealed to him strongly. The honest face, the bold eyes, the unmistakable nationality of the unfortunate, the mystery of the affair—but many things were mysterious in the fur-land where the rival companies carried on their hostile campaign for the trade. Why should this prisoner be more than other prisoners? There was no good answer to this, but Donald could not shake off the belief that the capture was something more than a common event.

Growing wary, he fell back until safe from discovery, and then paused where he could look back and see into the lower room of the building. Ten minutes later the light disappeared from above, and then all of the Northwesters became visible in the dim glow of the forge, as one of the party blew it into life.

This man Donald recognized as Cadotte, the blacksmith. Derosier talked with him, and then all but the blacksmith went out of the shop. The latter slowly moved to a rude couch and lay down. By that time his late associates had gone from sight.

Donald returned to his own room, but he did not easily forget the red-bearded prisoner. In vain he assured himself that he was only a trade captive, a mere incident of the bitter rivalry of the two companies. The incident would not down.

"I am nervous," Donald argued. "Things here have upset me, and I now make much of little. The time, the gloom of night, the secrecy, and the confinement of the man have operated upon me unnaturally. In trade war trappers have been murdered, and to take a captive is a small affair. If it were not for the secrecy ——"

He paused and considered further. Derosier had brought his red-bearded charge in as if he had something to hide.

"Bah!" muttered Donald, irritably. "I've known of plenty of such cases. Officers of the two companies do many things on the quiet. I've turned dreamer. I'll drop it, but if ever I can do a good turn for the prisoner, I'll see what he is like."

Returning to his bed, he managed to sleep the rest of the night out. In the morning there was no sign of the mystery. Cadotte, the blacksmith, had his hammer going soon after breakfast, and as the metal rang merrily he flung jokes to whoever stayed their steps briefly outside. If crime was afoot in his loft he did not take it to heart.

That day, for the first time, Donald went outside the post. Although Basil was successfully keeping up the role of semi-invalid, his older friend found inaction disagreeable, and he laid his budding nervousness to that condition. Leaving his rifle behind as a sort of pledge of good faith, he went into the woods, but not to wander far. He had no wish to be suspected of spying, so he kept near the garrison, talked freely with the few voyageurs he met, and finally brought up at the bank of a tributary of the river and sat down.

He was in this idle position when, as he seemed wholly alone, an odd chirrup was followed by the appearance of a great gray dog he recognized as Touch-Me-Not, and at his heels came Michel Ayot. The voyageur beamed in his vacant way at sight of the other man.

"Hola!" he cried lightly. "So you, too, seek the birds for companions? It is good, for they are wise, very wise. Parbleu, I know none but the beavers who are wiser. Hein?"

"They are certainly wise," Donald agreed kindly.

"Aye, and such merry souls. Birds are beyond most persons. They make sounds, but men do not understand. I know, and know that they talk much, and laugh, laugh, camarade. Vraiment, they are full of rare good wisdom."

Michel seated himself, and Touch-Me-Not took position by his side. The wolf-dog turned his eyes upon Donald and studied intently. The young man returned the gaze, wondering just what the beast was. The red-lined eyes, the fighting jaw, and surly face made a ferocious combination, but, as he had noticed before, these things seemed to disappear when Touch-Me-Not looked at his master.

"Ah! the fine chien!" murmured the voyageur, stroking the ugly head.

"You love your dog," said Donald, sympathetically.

"Aye, that I do. 'Tis all I have, and 'tis enough—hein? Had I brother, sister, wife or child, they would desert me, but not this gentle soul."

"But is he always gentle"

"Only to me. He is a killer, is the chien. Offer to seize me by the throat and—eh, what? Truly, you would die the death. Even Fabian Guigne and Moise Derg dare not worry me. They know the dog!"

"You need fear no one, then."

"I never did fear any one," was the simple reply, "but it is good to have Touch-Me-Not. He saves me trouble, and I am often so busy that I have no time to flog my enemies. Touch-Me-Not does it so quick it intrudes little on his time."

A squirrel paused near them and chattered his opinions vociferously. The dog cocked an attentive ear, but hardly deigned a glance.

"More of the cunning folks," said Michel, his eyes sparkling. "Oh! there is a world of cunning in the woods. Squirrels are finders and hiders. I copy from them much, very much, and who can do better—eh, who, frere? Aye they hide, hide, hide! So do I. I have many things hidden, voyageur. I learned that long ago, being taught by—some man who had a long head, though I forget who."

Donald had suddenly grown more interested.

"What have you hidden?" he asked.

"Everything," replied Michel, placidly. "I am the two-legged squirrel. I hide things here, there, everywhere. Under rocks, in trees, in odd nooks and corners."

"Do you remember where you hide them?"

"Always, and if I did forget the chien would remember. Aye, he would help me well. But I never forget——"

The voyageur paused and his gay face grew serious.

"Only one thing," he said plaintively.

"What was that?"

Michel carried a hand to his head and looked blank.

"I don't know what it was. Some time—some time long ago I had marks and figures, and I hid that paper. I think the man with the long head gave me that paper. I never had a paper of my own. I remember——"

The speaker's look was far-away and he tried to grasp something he could not recall.

"I remember he gave me that writing, with lines and figures on it. 'Hide it, Michel,' he said, 'for it is very valuable, and if I die you can tell them where it is, you know.'"

Donald was hanging intently on the

(Continued on page fifteen.)

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Here's good news at last for men and women whose hair is falling, who are growing bald and gray, whose scalps are covered with dandruff that nothing seems to keep away and whose heads itch like mad.

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We give you a binding guarantee, without any "strings" or red tape, that it won't cost you a cent if we do not prove to you that "Crystolis" will do all we claim for it, and what's important, we have plenty of money to back our guarantee. We have deposited $1,000 in our local Bank as a special fund to be forfeited if we fail to comply with this contract. Cut out the coupon below and mail it today to Creslo Laboratories, 100-U Street, Binghamton, N. Y.

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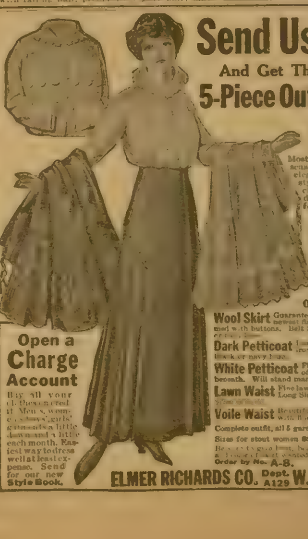

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Sizes for stout women 85c extra. All charges prepaid. Be sure to give bust, belt, hip and length measurements, and color of skirt wanted. Send money order or $1.00 bill. Order by No. A-8.

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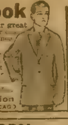

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PROVE YOUR IDENTITY AT BANKS, ETC., with photo identification enclosed in fine leather pocketbook comes with new $2[illegible] accident insurance policy. Cost $[illegible] a year. [illegible] pays for sickness and injury. Double benefits $10 a year. Agents wanted—high commission. Address Underwriters, 1345 Insurance Exchange, Chicago.

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At Post o' Peril.

(Continued from page thirteen.)

voyageur's words, but was too wise to interrupt. Michel was grasping at the dead past, and to speak a word to quicken his wits would be to chain them wholly.

"'With this writing,' said the long-headed man to me, 'they can find the thing I buried. Study the marks yourself, for if there is no other way they will help you to the'—what did he call it? I forget. But the marks——"

He picked up a stick and turned the smaller end toward the bare earth between him and Donald. Silent, now, he began to mark, while the Scotchman watched keenly.

Michel made a circle, and then sat and stared at it. Stirring a little, presently, he formed a figure 4 slowly and carefully. Then his hand stopped its motions and the stick its proddings. The seconds wore away and then the work was resumed. Michel drew, and under his touch a fairly good figure of a beaver was dug in the earth. He added a tree, a boat, and a trap, and then paused. Slowly he shifted the point of the stick to the center of the circle.

"The Black Beaver is buried there!" he said quietly.

A wild duck whirred past noisily, and the voyageur started and lost his far-away look. He saw the marks and laughed.

"You are an artist, camarade," he said. "You marked that out well."

The old vacant smile was back on his face, and Donald's hopes fled. He had, as he believed, been shown that Michel once possessed a crude map that told just where Bruce Campbell's treasure was buried. Almost had the mind-smitten man drawn the necessary directions, but he had lost himself in doing it. All he had done after making the figure was probably useless. The tree and the other things meant nothing, and Michel even believed that the other man had drawn them.

Donald's face was gloomy. Believing that Michel had once shared Campbell's secret; he saw that mental affliction had closed the door of hope.

CHAPTER IX.

MICHEL looked at the marks on the ground and nodded approvingly.

"You draw well, brother," he said.

"It was not I who did that," Donald replied. "You were the one. See, the stick is still in your hand."

"Eh, is it so? Then I must have had one of my sleepy spells. When they come upon me I do things I don't remember afterwards."

Donald ventured on a bold experiment.

"You said that Bruce Campbell buried the Black Beaver there and gave you a map so it could be found. You hid the map."

The voyageur seemed greatly perplexed.

"There is some mistake," he returned. "I never heard of that man you mentioned—what is his name?—and know nothing of a map. Truly, I must have fallen asleep and dreamed it, and so it all means nothing."

He smoothed out the earth, and the unfinished diagram was gone. The Scotchman sighed and let the matter drop. He had, as he believed, established the fact that Campbell, to safeguard his secret, had confided in a man he knew to be trustworthy, but when reason fled from Michel's mind the secret was buried deeper than the Black Beaver.

Beyond doubt, he thought, the voyageur had hidden the map, but where? If, as he had stated, he used rocks, trees and other places as means of concealment for his trivial possessions of later days, the map might be packed away in a similar nook. Search for it would be useless, but Michel's one touch of memory might possibly be repeated.

The figure 4 was part of the scale of distances, and if the other figures could be learned the treasure might be dug for systematically and quickly. But how was the discovery to be made?

Michel was tired of the inaction and rose to go.

"Business calls me," he said, nodding briskly. "You must know, camarade, that I am a very busy man. It is no small matter to be Governor of the Beasts and Birds of the Forest, but I like the work so well I never think of resigning. I shall be paid when there is more money in the trader's moccasin."

He took a step away but paused and looked at Touch-Me-Not.

"Chien," he added persuasively, "this man we are with is a good man, and he has asked me to give you a share in friendship. Shake the hand, chien, shake!"

The wolf-dog turned his red-streaked eyes first upon his master and then on Donald. He plainly hesitated at going so far in his attentions to a stranger, but the voice of his master and the gentle face were more than peremptory commands. In some mysterious way his fierce nature, that sprang into open rebellion at the call of authority, yielded obedience to Michel's persuasion. Now, he thrust out his heavy paw to meet Donald's extended hand and the two were briefly as one.

"Good dog!" said the Scotchman, trying to be as gentle as Michel. "I am glad to hold the foot of so fine a fellow."

It was like a fiction, with the savage face before him, but it was policy. Too wise to retain the paw more than for the moment, he relaxed his hold, and the foot returned to earth. There had ben no vibration of the stumpy tail, no quiver of the ears, and no softening of the warlike eyes, yet Michel was delighted.

"Aha!" he cried. "Do you see how he takes to you? From this time he will be your friend. If you need his help, call to him. He has accepted you as his brother."

Proof of this claim seemed wholly lacking, but Donald let it go without comment. Michel walked away, and the other man was left with no company but a great problem.

Unless he greatly erred, Michel had once known the secret of the Black Beaver. How, now, was his memory to be stimulated so he would remember? The name of Bruce Campbell, as well as mention of the buried treasure and the map, had alike failed to open the doors of the darkened mind. What device could be thought of to cause that opening?

He could think of none, and Basil, when informed of the latest developments, was equally at a loss, but Michel Ayot had become a person of additional importance.

The day passed and another night fell. When Donald retired, it was with the resolution to have an occasional look outside. He had the feeling that unusual events were afoot at Post o' Peril, and though he could not understand what, he wanted to learn what Trader Derosier's secrecy meant.

Sitting by the window, he looked out and watched and listened. It was past midnight, and the sentinels and the prowling dogs furnished the only visible life there. Waiting, Donald considered a question—was it possible to risk everything and dig for the Black Beaver at some time when the night was especially dark?

Would the grating of the spade be heard or the movements of the diggers be seen by the guards or others? Luck might lead them at once to where Campbell had buried the treasure, or make the upturning of a wide area necessary.

His study was suddenly interrupted. A light had flashed up in the blacksmith shop that had previously been dark and still. The window favored the line of vision, and human figures became visible. The watcher recognized Derosier and Cadotte. They talked briefly, and then the blacksmith and another man mounted the stairs.

The light appeared above, disappeared, and then the men came down. This

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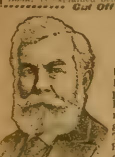

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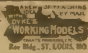

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Most good talkers are poor quitters.

If a man lends his influence he rarely gets it back.

Some men court, then marry, then go to court again.

Most of us would rather preach than practice, anyway.

A leader is a great man who knows when to sidestep.

Many a callow youth has been hard hit by a soft glance.

The only use some men seem to have for heads is to butt in.

Only a few years ago married women felt sorry for spinsters.

Any man can start a woman talking, but no man can stop her.

Better not try it on the dog—unless you are sure of your dog.

A first-class lawyer can break any will—excepting his wife's.

Many a man of small caliber thinks he's a big gun when he is loaded.

And one little taste of success makes a man long for all he can swallow.

Don't be in a hurry to accept a bald head as an official badge of wisdom.

The skeleton in the wife's closet is apt to be another female of the species.

Many a man imagines he's the whole circus who hasn't the ghost of a show

A mouse scares a woman almost as badly as a milliner's bill scares a man.

Occasionally a man makes a great hit by doing the wrong thing at the right time.

Our idea of a fool is a person who pays twice for the same brand of experience.

There are two sides to everything; yet a woman only has use for one side of a mirror.

Some men manage to make a little se in the world by rattling their ancestors bones.

But if a man is foolish and doesn't know it, it's a sign that he has no wife to instruct him

After a girl gives her hand in marriage she may discover later that she put her foot in it

A girl never fully appreciates a young man until some other girl tries to get a corner on his affections.

An egotist is a man who insists on telling you the things about himself that you want to tell him about yourself

It is always more or less of a shock to a woman when she discovers later in the game that her husband really did know what he was talking about.

At Post o' Peril

(Contiued from page fifteen.)

time they were not alone. Between them walked the red-bearded man, the mysterious prisoner. No struggle accompanied the descent. Even the burly Cadotte did not move more freely or boldly than the captive. He held his head high and had an air of defiance.

Donald dropped from his window and moved so alertly that he was outside the shop when the unknown was brought to face the trader. The two looked hard at each other, the prisoner in defiance and Derosier in cold implacability. Perhaps the Frenchman tried to stare the other down, but he did not succeed. Iron will had met its like.

"Well," finally spoke the trader deeply, "have you considered on what I asked of you?"

"Why, certain I have," the prisoner replied.

"And your answer?"

"To what?"

"Will you tell me where the fur-trader's cache is?"

"I've told you that I don't know——"

"And you lied when you said it!" curtly exclaimed Derosier. "Campbell confided in you. You know where he buried the—— But wait a bit! Just what did he bury?"

"I don't know," answered the prisoner.

"Are you insane, Gregg?"

Donald, listening, moved restlessly. He had heard a name and knew who the red-bearded man was. Campbell's lost voyageur was there

"I don't know about the insane part," was the sturdy reply, "and I don't know what you are talking about. Never heard of these things."

"Do you deny that Campbell buried—something valuable—and that he told you just what it was and where it was?"

"You have asked me all that before, and you have my answer. Not one thing do I know. I was a voyageur and nothing else. Campbell was master here. Remember, I was not regularly attached to his fort. If he made any confidences it was to his own men."

"You have once more put yourself on record," said Derosier, with cold composure. "I shall reason with you no more. If you want to act the fool, do it, but hark to this: If you do, it will go hard with you. You have a wife."

Donald saw the prisoner start and change expression. For the first time his bold eyes roved, and almost wildly.

"You have had little news where you have been the last two years," the trader went on, "but it is coming now. Your wife is here. She, too, is my prisoner. She will be here in one minute, and what I am about to do will make you talk. You will tell what you know."

She—here?" spoke Gregg, tremulously.

"Here, my prisoner. You will either talk, or she—you shall see!"

Derosier stamped upon the floor. The outer door opened and two French voyageurs entered. Between them came the pale lady who had claimed to be the wife of Angus Gregg.

Donald breathed hard. What tragedy was he about to witness?

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* * *

Gold and the Girl.

(Continued from page seven.)

many times, in the woman, a finer fiber of courage than runs in the man.

Dorothy flashed upon him her scorn, exultant now that her feminine intuition divined that he was weakening. She no longer doubted that he knew; she was certain of it, and happy to feel that she had only to press him harder to wring the truth from him.

"Grateful? For assisting you? I am not trying to help you. You deserve any punishment that could be inflicted upon you. I would say that even if you had not insulted me and lied about me. You are an evil man. I am offering you your safety only for the sake of Mr. Wade. If it were not for him, I would be glad to see you punished."

But her sense of approaching triumph had carried her off her feet. It aroused Helen Rexhill to bitter resentment, and when she began to speak, Dorothy was sorry that she had not let things rest as they were.

"Father, don't do it! It is insufferable that this woman should be threatening us. I would rather run any risk, I don't care what, than give in to her. I won't tolerate it!"

"You may be urging him to his death." Dorothy warned her. "I will not stop at anything to save Mr. Wade. If I tell the cattle men what I know, they will go wild Don't let her convince you, Senator Rexhill."

"I know that you will not stop at anything. I have seen that," Helen retorted. "A woman who can do what you have done——"

"Helen!" The Senator was carrying with him a sense of gratitude toward Dorothy, and in the light of her spirit, he was a bit ashamed of the part he had played against her. "Let us forget that. At least, this young woman is offering us the chance."

"Listen!" Dorothy cried sharply.

Outside, in the street, a galloping horseman was shouting as he rode. The girl ran to the window, and drawing back the curtains, looked out. The lusty voice of the puncher bore well into the room. "They've caught Tug Bailey at Sand Bluffs! He's on his way back here now!"

"Senator Rexhill," said Dorothy, turning away from the window, "take the chance I've offered you while you can. Do it for the sake of the old friendship between you and Mr. Wade. No matter how bitterly he feels toward you, he would not want you here when Bailey confesses. It would be too awful." She shuddered. "Tell me where he is, and get away from Moondance at once."

"He hasn't confessed yet," Helen interposed.

"He will." Dorothy looked at her coldly "They'll put a rope about his neck, and he'll confess. Those men always do. Try to think what you're saying. You'd be sorry if your father were shot down here. Go with him while you can. I know these people better than you do."

The Senator swallowed hard and mopped his damp forehead with his handkerchief. There was nothing to do but leave, and that quickly, he knew. After all, in the face of death, ruin seemed a bagatelle.

"So far as I am informed, Wade is confined at Coyote Springs, up in the mountains. That's all I know about it. I hope you find him there. He ought to be proud of you."

Dorothy caught her hands to her breast in a little gesture of exultation.

"You'll go?"

"In the morning."

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CHAPTER VII.

THE PURSUIT.

FOR some time longer David listened, and then he gently aroused Major Pollard and told him what he had heard. The officer absorbed the information with an impassive face.

"Probably you are right," he agreed. "I have no doubt that our country is dotted thickly with Jap spies. Trust them to miss no chance."

"But what good does it do this chap to go around and ask boys if they would enlist if needed?"

"Depend upon it, he only fills in time when he does that. His real work is far more serious and important, but when he has an idle moment he probably devotes it to side issues. By mere chance you have heard him ask questions of schoolboys."

The Major stared at the back of the Jap's head with sharp attention.

"A spy, eh?" he added softly. "Good chap for us to know about. It would not be a bad notion to track him to his lair in San Francisco, for if he's what you think, you may depend upon it he lied when he said he was a stranger there, and that means he has quarters there. Are you acquainted in the city?"

"I was never there."

"Do you think you could follow him to his destination?"

"I shall be glad to try, but I suspect that he is a sharp chap, possibly too sharp to be tracked without his discovering it."

"That is quite possible, but if you see fit to try, it may do much good. Be as crafty as you can in the pursuit."

"I'll do my best, sir."

The rest of the ride was accomplished in due time. All the while the spy talked with his companion and did not once look behind him, and the situation seemed ripe for discoveries. With arrangements properly made with the Major, David left him when the stop came, and fell in behind the Jap. Then the pursuit was on in earnest.

David tried to be wily, and kept at a respectful distance from his quarry, looking at him only by stealth, but it appeared to be a safe and certain venture. The foremost walker never looked behind him.

The pursuit practially ended when a large hotel was reached, for the Jap entered with easy assurance, but David followed farther. Still looking only ahead, the spy passed through the lobby and entered the writing-room, and as the open door gave view of him as he sat and used pen and paper, David lingered.

The writing was brief, and then the paper was enveloped and the writer turned to a hotel-boy, said a few words, swung about, and entered an elevator that was about to ascend. The game seemed to be fully over with, and the quarry housed, so David was about to leave when the boy approached him. He still held the envelope.

"For you," he said briefly.

"For me?" David echoed.

"So the other gentleman said. He said he was in a hurry to go upstairs."

The unsealed envelope was accepted with some hesitation, and as the boy turned away David opened it slowly. On the sheet of paper a few words were written, and these were:

"Compliments. Did you enjoy your walk?"

The blood rushed to the reader's face. He knew then that his elaborate pursuit had gone for nothing, and that it had probably been known of or suspected before the railroad station was left. For a while mortification was keen, but the mood passed and admiration for the Asiatic took its place.

"You are sharp, Mr. Jap," was the silent comment, "and this time the game is yours, but as we have already met twice, it may be we shall see each other again. Perhaps the shoe will be on the other foot then."

He was about to leave, but changed his mind and accosted the boy.

"Who was the man who gave you this note?" he asked.

"Don't know. He doesn't belong here."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes. I know even our newest guests by sight. He wasn't one of them. I suppose he has gone to somebody's room."

David doubted it, but as his orders called for secret pursuit only, he abandoned the venture. Going outside he called a carriage and was driven to Major Pollard's hotel. It was long before that officer appeared, but he finally came in smiling.

"Had a long talk with the General," he said, "and one quite satisfactory. He thinks as we do, and before this has probably telegraphed in cipher to Washington. One of his aids will follow tomorrow and the President will soon have all the facts."

"What will be done?"

"As I expected, the General will send a spy to the scene of your recent experiences in Lower California. That will mean no doubt of your word, but simply be proper official procedure. When the Government gets the facts, mobilization will probably follow. The General wants to see you tonight. Well, about your experiences?" he added, and the reply was not delayed.

"Now," said David, after making his report, "how did that Jap know I was following him?"

"I think I can tell, and I scented failure at the start. When all hands rose in the car at the station, I caught a side look from him, and now think that he recognized me. A little later, after we separated, he gave me another glance, and probably noticed that you were no longer with me. Slight as this fact was to hang suspicion on, I think he did it."

"But how did he know I was in the hotel——"

David stopped short and then flushed a trifle.

"Now I think further, there were mirrors in the lobby."

"That makes the final item. He saw you, and knew all. A sharp rascal, and one we may properly report to the General. Except for that we'll drop the spy."

Leaving the hotel soon afterward, they had more than an hour with the Commanding General, and David was asked questions steadily. What he told was carefully noted and weighed, and neither by word nor look did the high officer show doubt of the reliability of the report.

When all was told, the General turned to Pollard.

"Major," he said, "I deferred my telegram to Washington, but it goes within the half-hour. Also, my aid will take the first train East with more complete information and instructions. This is a time for action."

He again faced David, rose, and held out his hand.

"Young man," he added, "not only we who are here, but your country as a whole owes you gratitude. You have done a great work and have done it well. When the war comes where shall you be found?"

"On the firing-line, sir!" the youth quickly replied.

"Good! And if I have any say in the matter, you will have something better than a private's uniform. The country has need for young fellows like you." He stopped suddenly, hesitated, and then continued, "What are you to do next?"

"Mr. Cavendish and I agreed that I was not to return to his road, so I am not engaged. I've had the hope that there might be something I could do for the good of the country."

"So there is! I shall send five men to Lower California to see what can be found there, and nobody else is so well equipped as yourself. Since you have just been there. Will you be one of the party?"

"Gladly, sir!"

"Don't overlook the fact that there will be sharp danger. You will be spies, and spies are dealt with harshly if detected. You understand that, don't you?"

"Fully!"

"And you'll risk it?"

"Give me the chance, and I'm there every time."

Impulsively the General reached out and again took the boy's hand.

"One of the sort the United States needs to fill in the niches when we old fellows are gone," he declared. "Eh, Major?"

"One of the ready men!" asserted Pollard, grimly.

The interview was over, and while the callers rested at their hotel, the General attended to his own pressing business. When day dawned his telegram was long since gone, and the aid was riding by express toward Washington. Before another night fell five men quietly left San Francisco for the South. David was one of the number.

A few more days and the General was agreeably impressed to learn that enlistment and mobilization had been ordered by the Government.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCOUTING PARTY.

THE call rang through the country like an electric flash. The regular army was put on more satisfactory footing, and the militia of the various States responded finely. Combined, they made a little force that was excellent as far as it went, but their total furnished so limited an army that a large command of invaders could sweep them away, turning gallant soldiers into dead men.

But there was something more. The summons for enlistment had been heard by the high-school graduates, and they answered swiftly. All over the land the call had gone. It had reached all professions and trades, and budding lawyers, doctors, and college men came shoulder to shoulder with engineers, chemists, electricians, clerks, plumbers, carpenters, and many other workers, while the senior classes in the high-schools deserted their books for more urgent business.

From shore to shore the trained young men hastened to the recruiting offices, and nobody was turned away. A million men were wanted, and they were flocking to the flag. The "ready men" had made themselves heard.

The country was in a thrill that reached every heart. The newspapers told what it meant. Nothing was said about trouble on the Pacific Coast, so the gigantic headlines proclaimed coming war with France. In Washington the French ambassador talked with the Secretary of State, and they chuckled together as they smoked and smiled, for the press had hoodwinked itself.

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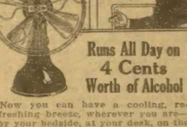

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this country," said the Frenchman. "Formerly, your rulers took the public fully into confidence, and every secret that ought to have been kept quiet was made open to the world, so your enemies knew the facts as soon as your own people. That was suicide. Now, you are alive. Secrecy does it!"

He nodded wisely, yet he positively knew nothing more than that France was not aimed at by this military flurry. What he guessed was the privilege of his existence.

What the Secretary knew was another matter. The mobilization had not been wholly on the strength of David's report. News had come from a secret agent in Japan, news that would have been no more than a puzzling mystery alone, but, coupled with the tidings from Mexico, made the total that had led to the call.

Washington was flooded with reports. All the States were enrolling their "ready men," regiments were formed and officered, and—then came the surprise of the year. The boy soldiers marched to railroad stations, and there took train for the Pacific. Special trains went packed with men, and their faces were toward Asia. Then the country awoke from its mistake and faced something like the truth.

The flood poured upon the Coast. Men uniformed and armed to the hour filled city and town, and the first of the "ready men" had come.

On a certain evening two jaded youths appeared at the General's quarters, travel-stained and thin, but alive with energy and resolution. Previously, three of the five sent to Lower California had returned with reports. Now, the last of the number were back, and David was one of them.

"Well?"

The General questioned eagerly, after a quick handshake with the messengers, and it was at David he looked.

"I should say there is no time to lose, sir," was the direct reply. "Those fellows down there know that our soldiers are being poured forth to the Pacific, and they will lose no time. Cavendish has fled north in safety—came part way with us—and his railroad is being used to forward the men and supplies of the allies. They are to march into California at once."

It was much in little, but many questions were asked and answered, and details made known. At the end the General smiled easily.

"Let them come!" he remarked. "There will be sharp fighting, but we are ready. By the way, David, your friend Pollard will want to see you at once."

"I'll not keep the Major waiting, sir."

"Don't call him Major again. He is a full-fledged general now, newly promoted. Go to him for news."

David went, and was warmly greeted, but Pollard wasted few words on lesser matters.

"I'm ordered to the southern tip of California with my command," he announced. "What do you guess is part of it?"

"What, sir?"

"A Nebraska regiment that includes the boys of Lincoln you graduated with A fine regiment, all complete, except that there is one serious lack."

"What is that, General?"

"A second lieutenant for Company C."

So saying Pollard shut one eye and nodded sagely at his companion. The inference was so plain that David flushed.

"That gap may be filled sometime," the General proceeded, "for a commission is duly filled out and ready when the man appears. His name—ha, hum! how poor my memory is!—ah! I have it. Lieutenant David Baldwin! Do you know where we can find him?"

David knew, but just what he said he never could tell afterward. The honor had been unexpected, and he felt so much confusion that he was conscious of only one thing then, a resolution to deserve it.

"Fagged out?" Pollard asked abruptly, after a pause.

"Only a little. I'm ready for orders."

"You shall have two. First, go to bed and sleep twelve hours. Next, report to me after that, and I'll see you uniformed and armed and escorted to your comrades of Company C."

He leaned forward and spoke more rapidly.

"This is for your private ear. I know I can trust you, for you have proved your worth. San Diego County is to see the brunt of the battle. Already there are signs that demonstrations will be made by sea against San Francisco and the ports of Oregon and Washington, but these will be a bluff, designed to draw our strength away from southern California. Everything will be settled there. Give them a victorious army down that way, and all of the ports south of San Francisco would be open to warships and disembarking soldiers. Will they have that victorious army?"

"I don't think so, sir."

"I know they won't. Now you can go."

David went, and slept as directed. Afterwards he found his regiment and was with his former schoolmates. One of the first to greet him was Percy Turner.

"Be sure to treat me respectfully," said that young man, with a grin. "I am now a full-fledged corporal, and a great stickler for official dignity. The High General of the army has few pointers on me."

Events proceeded with a sweep from that time. Two days were used in preparations, and then train was taken at Oakland and the boys rode south. Pollard was in command of all. With him were two regiments of regulars, and the militia of Michigan, but mostly his force was made up of school graduates.

Train after train filled and steamed away, a long line that was hurrying thousands of men to San Diego County, and more waited for means of transportation. A big army was to be thrown into the south of California.

Thus it came to pass that a huge bivouac was established in the foothills of the San Jacinto Mountains, a temporary home of infantry, cavalry, artillery, and its adjuncts—an army with all its features of supply and service. Right in those hills the clash was to be expected, for it was too late for the Asiatics to change their plans.

As soon as possible scouting parties were sent nearer to the boundary line between the two countries, cavalry moving along the lower level and infantry through the higher, rougher region. They went, as the General expressed it, to feel the pulse of the situation, to see if there were signs of the invaders on California soil.

With one of these parties went David and half of his company, and the gravity of the situation led the Captain, a veteran regular army man named Allison, to take command himself, the first lieutenant remaining behind with the balance of the company. This course made David second in command of the detachment.

For a time the way was fairly good, and some semblance of order was maintained, but as they ascended, the increasing difficulties led to a change, each man making his way as best he could, and all winding through ravines, arroyos, and other natural cutways, without regard for anything but progress

"War," said Percy, beaming upon David, "means climbing hills."

"We are not the only ones who can climb, if thought best."

"Never thought of that. Say, have we got to scale the summits?"

"Hardly!" and the young Lieutenant laughed. "San Jacinto is too tough for that."

"Then why do you look that way so much?"

"It struck me that lookouts might be up that way, and watching us."

"This is Yankee soil."

"Just why the Japs might covet use of it."

"Well, what now?"

David had stopped where a cross canyon led upward like a thread driven into the mountain. He was looking hard, but made no reply. Then Maynard, formerly an electrician, suddenly touched his arm.

"Lieutenant," he said somewhat brusquely, "will you let me use your glass?"

David passed it over, regretting that his suspicions had not been strong enough to lead him to use it himself, and Maynard adjusted the focus. He gazed long and carefully, and then turned to his companions.

"Unless I am mistaken, there's something up there that may interest us," he announced.

"What?"

"A wireless station. Have we any there?"

"Never heard of any. Can it be the Japs have established one to spy on us?"

CHAPTER IX.

BY THE WIRELESS.

DAVID hastily took the glass and trained it on the suspected point. Before, he had merely thought that he saw something move on an elevation, but Maynard had brought new ideas into life. He gazed hard, but ended by shaking his head.

"I can't be sure, for atmospheric conditions, rather than distance, are against the eye, and I have not the training in such things that you have. Call it a wireless, do you?"

"I'm almost sure of it."

David turned to a soldier and spoke keenly.

"Go to Captain Allison with my compliments and ask him if he will come this way," he directed.

The Captain was soon there, and he, too, had a look. Decision was slow, and he held silence for some time.

"I think you are right," he then said, "though I'll not affirm it. We have wireless stations of our own in these hills, but none near here. We must know what's up there. Baldwin, take twelve men and go at once. If it's a Jap wireless, smash the thing into bits. Then come back. Use your judgment generally. Wait a little. Although such a thing is not to be expected, there may be more there than we expect. It would be like Asiatic cunning to guard a wireless with numerous men. Should the force be too much for you, return without sacrifice of life. Start immediately."

The men were told off, and they included Percy Turner and Maynard.

"Now, then," said the irrepressible Percy, "life begins to look worth living. Believe me, I know the two ends of a revolver from each other."

David did not answer. He was entering on his first special duty as a soldier, and the gravity of the situation impressed him. It was one thing to go up the mountain and destroy a wireless, but something different to manage properly. Complications might meet him on the higher ground.

The little detachment climbed steadily, though not with haste calculated to lessen their strength. They must arrive fresh, not scant of breath nor strained of muscle. Aware that the miniature canyon furnished a field where enemies above could see too much for prudence, he led his men to one side, and the varied nature of the way furnished the desired cover.

Thus they toiled upward, always alert and always ready for unexpected encounters, for there was not a rod passed by that was not liable to bring danger and death to them. What the hills hid only the tangled way could tell. Percy stared ahead as they moved through an arroyo.

"Can't see two rods in front of my nose," he remarked. "How the dickens are we to know when we get there?"

"Did you notice the outlying country?" David asked.

"No. Why?"

"I took notice of every elevation, and can tell exactly when we get near. Landmarks, you understand."

"Never thought of that myself. For a corporal I'm dead slow."

The Lieutenant had told no more than truth. His experience in railroad work had served him well, and, as he stated, every little peak had its story to tell, even if the suspected point was no longer to be seen.

They finally neared their destination and the leader halted.

"You will stay here until you get your orders," he said. "I'm going on scout. Keep out of sight as much as possible. Yes, seek the niches you see here, and be sure you don't let the sun glint on your weapons. Don't call to

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each other. Be invisible and still. Understand?"

There was a responsive reply and David started. Maynard addressed him longingly.

"Won't you let me go, too?" he asked.

The Lieutenant gave him a sharp glance. At school he had known the young fellow for a lad of great common sense, and now knew that his work as an electrician had been where his judgment must have been developed well.

"Come along," he replied. "Nobody else."

They scaled a sloping side of the arroyo and made the start.

"Not like the Lincoln High School," Maynard remarked.

"Not a bit."

Conversation ended with these remarks, and David became more secret in his movements. He knew he was close upon the thing he was to investigate, and the problem was acute. Would the Japs have outlooks to detect just such movements? A shot from ambush was liable to come at any instant.

Presently the leader dropped flat and, turning his head, motioned his companion forward. Then, for form's sake, he asked a question to which he needed no answer.

"What do you call that?"

"A wireless, by gracious!" whispered Maynard in reply.

"We've got them!"

"Tight as a drum! We can't see from here whether anybody is near the thing, but it looks to be in good shape."

"We get only the top view of it, but we're going to see more. Keep with me for now, and we'll crawl along a bit."

The start was made, and, as David said, by crawling. He had set his heart on doing the work neatly and without loss of life to his country, and the first step was to learn just how many men were there. Creeping, they utilized rock, shrub, and convenient hollows, and had neared a point where clearer view seemed possible, when he heard the rattling of gravel and felt that somebody was approaching.

"Get behind that rock, Maynard!" he whispered. "Don't let them see you if it can be avoided."

For his own part he writhed to the cover of a bunch of dwarfed pines, and there lay still, his revolver ready for use.

The steps came nearer and two men appeared less than fifty yards away. His spirits took a bound when he saw they were Japanese, for the mastership of the wireless was settled. They swung along with lithe, easy grace, and seemed to be in haste, but one of the two abruptly turned his head and looked back.

"You can depend upon us, Matseru," he called. "We'll be here again on time."

No reply was audible to the Americans, and the Japs continued with increased speed.

"We're rid of two of them," muttered Maynard. "Pity their course is not directly toward Allison's men."

"Trust them not to run into any trap."

David advanced again, still creeping, still secret and as quiet as possible. Five minutes passed, and he found himself at the foot of a perpendicular uplift of rock, the summit of which was thickly crowned with miniature bushes. It was a safe spot for a stealthy look, and he rose and cautiously parted the leaves a trifle. He saw the wireless, and at its base a man he recognized at first sight. It was the Japanese spy of his former experiences.

The legs of other men were visible, but his position was unfavorable for survey, and he shifted to a spot a few feet away. Once more he parted the leaves, and the whole level beyond was free to his view. He saw the wireless more distinctly, saw the spy and two other dark-skinned men, the latter of whom were busy around the plant, and he also saw——

He gasped with surprise and consternation. Marcia Lander was sitting near the spy.

This story, developing very thrilling happenings, will be continued in the Ledger issue of next week. If you are not a subscriber to the Ledger we would like to have your name on our list. The Ledger is only $1.00 per year; it is worth many times that amount. Send in your subscription, for many great stories that you cannot afford to miss will appear during the coming months.

* * *

King of the World.

(Continued from page five.)

"Let me see them?" Waldron asked.

"Not developed yet," Schmidt replied nonchalantly. "What was it you wanted to see me about, Wally?" He had regained his composure.

"Why, I just wanted to say hello, and ask about your trip, and ask you to let me have the—" he pointed at the case—"the undeveloped negative."

"I like your nerve!" Schmidt laughed.

"You've seen only a part of it," Waldron rejoined.

"I believe I should not like it in larger doses." Schmidt spoke slowly, and Waldron recognized the dangerous tone that had come into his voice. "Let's drop this fencing and get down to business, Mr. Waldron. I find you in my rooms when I return from a short absence. Why are you here?"

Waldron laughed. He had noticed the shaking of the curtains, and knew that Ludwig was about to appear on the scene and assume charge of the matter. He had gone as far as he thought he should—as far as he cared to. The curtains were drawn apart and the inventor stepped forward. Schmidt's face was blank for an instant, then flushed with anger and apprehension.

"Perhaps I can explain that better than Wally," Ludwig said slowly. "As a matter of fact Mr—Mr. Schmidt—he is here only as my friend."

"Oh, your accomplice," Schmidt sneered.

"If you wish to put it that way—yes." Ludwig thought it strange that he felt no bitterness toward the man who had tried to rob him of his brain child, but in a fleeting instant remembered that Schmidt was performing what to him was a patriotic act. So his tone and manner were more friendly when he continued. "It happens to be the fortune of war, Smith—I'll call you that because I've known you by that name—that I discovered very soon what happened at my office during my absence yesterday, and that one of my men—the foreman—noticed your give-away little finger."

"You ought to have that finger fixed, Smith," Waldron interrupted with lazy nonchalance. "It's told on you twice within a few days."

"Go on," Schmidt said curtly, keeping anger from mingling with his disappointment and surprise.

"Well," the inventor went on, "we learned, in time to get the evening express, that you had visited my plant and had departed with your camera case containing my little impulse-directing box which you had—er—appropriated or commandeered—I do not know the diplomatic word."

"Well?" Schmidt demanded.

"Well," Waldron answered. "We are here to receive it back again."

Schmidt laughed. Ludwig smiled.

"I think it will be the better course, Mr. Schmidt," the inventor said gently. "It will do you no good—perhaps you have already discovered that you are completely in the dark as to the method of its operation. It will do your—er—employer no good."

"We might learn the secret," the man argued.

"I think not." Ludwig spoke confidently. "In any event not in time to be of any service to you in the present conflict. Besides, you will please remember that, according to your implied admission, in the presence of a witness, in addition to the evidence at my shop, you have in your possession property which belongs to me."

"You mean?" Schmidt's eyebrows lifted as he asked the question.

"I mean that unless you turn this box over to me now, I shall exercise my right to take possession of my own property."

"You'll have a sweet time doing it," Schmidt retorted.

"Steady there, Smith," Waldron called sharply. "We took the precaution of securing a search warrant. There are two policemen on guard and within call. You must also remember that this boarding-house, these rooms, are the residence of a newspaper correspondent—not of the—er—any foreign embassy—and consequently cannot claim exemption from the police laws of the United States. I trust you realize your position, Mr. Schmidt. It is not the same as if you were duly accredited as an employe of a foreign embassy. You are only an American citizen and subject to American laws."

During this speech the man's face had grown red with rage, and then pale with the realization of impending defeat. The inventor took part again in the talk, his gentle manner acting like oil on troubled waters.

"I think Mr. Schmidt appreciates the situation. Perhaps it will make his disappointment less keen if I tell him that I have absolutely no fear that he or any one else could learn how to operate the innocent-looking little box, even if he had it for a year."

"So that is the reason you are so anxious to get it back," the man said half-sneeringly.

"No, that is the reason why it did not worry me much when I learned you had secured possession of it," Ludwig replied calmly. "The reason I am anxious to get it back is because it is rather an expensive thing to make, and it would require at least two weeks, in addition to about two thousand dollars, to make a duplicate. I cannot spare the money and I do not wish to spare the time."

"Oh, then time is rather precious?" Schmidt inquired boastingly.

"So much so that I am going to take the liberty of looking into your camera case, while Mr. Waldron keeps his automatic pointed in your general direction."

The inventor retained his calm, almost friendly, chatty manner, but no one could mistake the look of determination in his face. He stepped to the camera case. A movement by Schmidt was checked suddenly by the command of the correspondent, who had seated himself on the arm of the chair and was apparently carelessly playing with an automatic pistol.

Within two minutes the box had been lifted from the camera case and was in its inventor's arms. Waldron joined his friend at the door. Before the two departed from the room, while they were in the doorway, Ludwig said cheerfully to the baffled Schmidt:

"Our compliments to our mutual friend, the—er—perhaps we had better not indulge in personalities—to your employer!"

This interesting story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding chapters of it.

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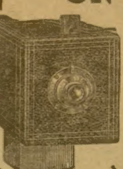

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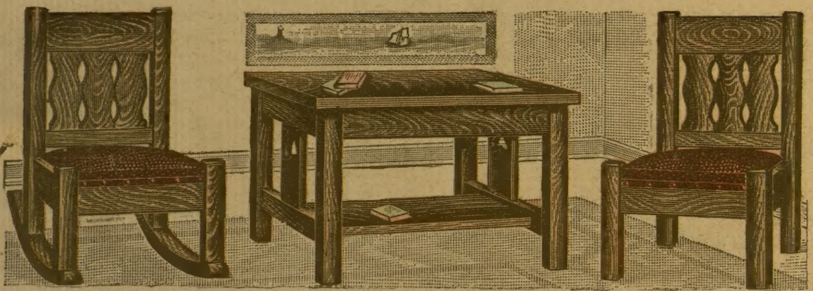

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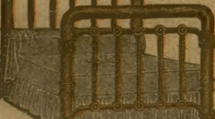

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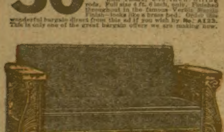

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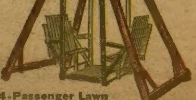

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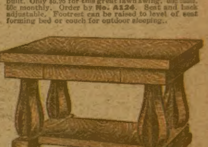

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